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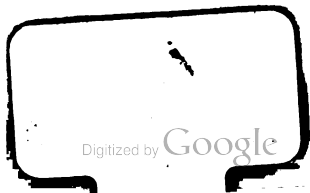
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ARMY MISRULE

with

BARRACK THOUGHTS.

ARMY MISRULE

with

BARRACK THOUGHTS

and other Poems.

BY A COMMON SOLDIER.

"These are Truths Unquestionable."

JUNIUS.



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Dedication.

*"Because I feel that, in the heavens above,
The angels whispering to one another,
Can find, in all their burning terms of love,
None more devotional than that of 'mother,'"*

I inscribe these few thoughts to mine.



PREFACE.

At a time when the national defence is acknowledged to be the chief topic of the day, I make no apology for laying before the public the facts relative to Army Management which this little book contains. No reader, if he gives credence to my statements, can fail to be impressed by the magnitude of the evils I disclose. Let those who doubt me, not be content with doubting, but sift the matter for themselves. Surely it is important that I should be refuted if I assert the thing that is not ; and necessary that public opinion should be brought to bear upon the authorities, if I speak truth. When the article on the Army appeared, in a magazine, some months ago, it was reviewed by

the *Army and Navy Gazette*; and therefore many officers in high places must have seen or read it. Yet, though I subsequently called for denial, if it were in the power of those officers to give it, I have remained unchallenged until now. It may be urged that my insignificant position merited silent contempt; still I fail to see a logical justification for the evils which I indicate, in such a line of argument, and I plead guilty to a hope that the public will agree with me.

Of the first poem which the volume contains, it were perhaps better to say nothing; for, to a world "populous chiefly with doleful creatures," any addition to the stock of morbid verse can scarcely be productive of pleasure. Nevertheless, since it was written (a few lines excepted) at Chatham, it is, to a certain extent, indicative of that hopeless feeling which finds reverberation in the breast of many a soldier. But I shall be content to see this, and those following it, completely ignored, provided that my one object be accomplished,

namely, the rousing of the public to a sense of the dangers arising from monopoly of power by a class too long shut in from the scrutiny of the nation and the press. I shall then be fully rewarded and at peace with my experience, which had hitherto led me chiefly to find a negative comfort in the assurance that—

Fortuna nimium quem favet stultum facit.

The greater number of the poems are reprints : two have been illustrated in the columns of *Once a Week*.

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ARMY MISRULE.

A LETTER TO LORD PALMERSTON.

“He who is born is lifted : life is war.”—YOUNG.

MY Lord—I address you simply because you are by accident the most prominent man in the country ; nor do I hope to furnish myself with a better pretext any more than I hope to discover ethical satisfaction in the investigation of that prominence. It is not necessary that I should do more by way of preface than announce myself as *nobody* ; for, no matter how high an estimate I may have formed of my individual merit, the facts connected with the subject on which I propose to dwell are alone worthy of your attention as a statesman. Neither is it advisable that I should detain you while I recount the motives which led me to adopt a profession so degrading as that of the army. There are few men, my lord, who, like yourself, possess the happy art of alighting ever on their legs, no matter

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how great the number of adverse circumstances against which they may have to contend. Success in life is, I take it, generally attributable less to individual merit than to a "fortuitous concurrence" of favourable contingencies; for the current of misfortune swamps even the pride of some of us, and sweeps us onward to the "Slough of Despond" regardless whether we sink or swim.

In discussing the subject in hand, my lord, I must ask you—joking apart—to be serious: I will not detain you long. I beg also that you will not look upon me as an individual devoid of all sense of the ludicrous; for, surely, in appealing to you, my Lord, *at all*, concerning this serious question, I display a keen appreciation of the most refined comedy: those only who, like myself, have been born in that portion of her Majesty's dominions where a feeling for wit is said to be indigenous, can truly estimate the sacrifice I make in foregoing the opportunity of running a tilt with you on that ground which your lordship has rendered almost classical. The army, as your lordship will not fail to have felt, is *such* a capital subject for joke: so serious, safe, and so little understood. I will also ask you, my lord, to forgive any seeming impertinence of which I may be guilty; for indeed I may plead youth (relatively speaking, I am quite a child). You will, no doubt, excuse, too, without solicitation, any breaches of etiquette, when I inform you

that I have actually touched *but two* and spoken with *but three* noblemen as yet. If the mere fact of my having written be disagreeable to you, I can only say that, had not routine prevented, I should long since have ceased, perhaps, to be in a position to trouble you.

"The dialect of conversation," says *The Spectator*, "is too swelled with compliment, and too surfeited with expressions of respect. The old English plainness and sincerity is in great measure lost among us; and the world has grown so full of dissimulation that men's words are hardly any signification of their thoughts." But the matter is well enough, so long as we understand one another; notwithstanding that, if a man measures his words by his heart, speaks as he thinks, and does not express more kindness to every man than men usually have for any man, he can hardly escape censure for want of breeding.

But now, my lord, to business. Parenthetically, it is necessary that I premise three things. Firstly, that, in politics, I am of the school of Shenstone, who held that if a man ought heartily to stickle for any cause, it should be toleration. "Toleration," he says, "should be his party." Hence you will see that I cannot, on principle, however well my judgment may tally with my inclination, be an enemy to you. Secondly, that I am no democrat, but the reverse. And thirdly, that I am not of

those who enter the army with a bad character, and leave it with a worse. I served as a private in the first corps in the profession; not for any lengthened period, truly, but sufficiently long to become familiar with its general management, and to draw conclusions as to the management of other branches of the military establishment less favoured than itself. I had many opportunities of gaining information with regard to the general routine of a soldier's life; and I made it my business to seek it: thus it is that I am in a position to fearlessly assert that I formed a higher, because a truer, estimate of what the British soldier really is than could be gained for centuries by the perusal of Blue Books. The marvel is, my lord, not that he is what he is, but rather that he stops short of being what the vital exigencies of Red Tape would drive him to become. On the day of my release from this most degrading of all slaveries, which holds out no prospect of, or inducement to, mental aggrandisement (nay, compels the individual to submit to the domination of an aggregate block-headism), I strolled into the schoolroom of the barrack at Chatham to bid farewell to a non-commissioned officer who held authority there. He was aged, unambitious, rusted—as who grown gray as a subaltern in the service is not?

“Time's plough
Had furrowed wrinkles in his forehead old,”

and he seemed, in the words of Shakespeare, “a

mere forked radish with a head fantastically carved," a breathing gargoyle, whose presence was a sort of living proof that there was, or is, something national in that style of architecture which your lordship and Mr. Spurgeon so sweepingly condemn. He confirmed, by arguments, founded on his own experience, many points on which I was doubtful, and many others of which I had been convinced by my own observation: I shall lay these before you in the course of this communication. He urged me, too, in Heaven's name, to write, if I had the power. "Let the country know," said he, "how degraded we become, and how much is wasted in preventing us from being better than we are. I have fat here," he said, pointing towards the barrack-square, where the human machines were being drilled, "hour after hour, wondering how the best part of a man can be so gradually undermined, and yet the carcass still remain what it is, presenting a total apparently so stable and so sound." I took special note of these words, after I left him, and felt glad that the more lawless members of his profession were strangers to such reflections—for their ignorance is, to a certain extent, a guarantee for the safety of the Constitution.

When the common soldier attains a conviction of his own power, then, my lord, if changes cannot be effected previously which shall give him an earnest of progressive concessions commensurate

with the march of civilisation in other communities, then, I say, it were well for the country that *you* were not First Minister. I tell you there is not a more unhappy nor a more discontented class in this island than that which goes to make up the ranks of the British army. How could it be otherwise? There is no use in hoodwinking the fact; for though you know it not, the conversation of the barrack-rooms, without an exception, is neither complimentary to Government in the concrete, nor suggestive of a continuity of forbearance; but is revolutionary in the extreme. No one, my lord, so well as yourself, knows how much an Englishman will bear; but you cannot on that account be blind, unless knowingly, to the fact that even his forbearance has a limit. It is a bold assertion to make that the institution upon which we depend for protection is revolutionary at heart; but there is comfort in the conviction that there is a wide difference between what is inborn and that which is merely superinduced—between the spirit which would subvert order from a delight in anarchy, and the spirit which would seek but justice. If steps be not taken, my lord, in time, the soldier will undertake for himself the reorganisation of the infamous and degrading system by which he is ruled. If you would spend but one night (disguised as a young recruit) in any barrack-room in the kingdom, you could not fail to be convinced that a sense of power,

and a tendency to try the efficacy of exerting it, prevails largely in the ranks. Curfes—or, as your lordship would facetiously phrase it, *cursorary remarks*—both loud and deep foretell it; long-drawn sighs for liberty again, and thirstings to be once more a beggar—to be anything rather than a soldier—foretell it: while denunciations on the humbug and the falsehoods which were brought to bear on him, indicate that the soldier fosters a sense of wrong, which must ultimately grow to formidable proportions, as the truth begins to teach him that the recruiting-sergeant is, after all, but part of a system having its root in another quarter, and fostered by an oligarchy which ignorance believes it has a prescriptive right to *hate*, and certainly has the strength to *overthrow* at the expense of a nation's welfare. “There is nothing so revolutionary,” says Dr. Arnold (I quote from memory), “as the strain to keep things stationary when the whole world is, by the very law of creation, in eternal progress;” and you cannot expect, my lord, that the soldier will remain insensible to this truth, or to the advantages of citizenship (which bring it home to him by contrast), unless you shut him out altogether from intercourse with his fellow-men. This I presume to be a task too difficult and dangerous for the imbecile legislation of Routine to grapple with.

But Routine cannot be so disinterestedly blind as not to recognise the ultimate necessity of legislating

to stem the inroads of reform; for, if it would now rule the soldier by the same laws which were framed to meet the requirements of a past, and consequently lower, state of civilisation, it must strive to keep him ignorant of the advance which that civilisation has made within the last and present centuries. Routine must look to extraordinary exertion or to speedy concession, my lord: it will not die in its bed else; and I would strongly urge the expediency of the latter course as the wiser of the two.

First, let the degrading institution of the lash be altogether done away—at once and for ever. It cannot cure the evil it was designed to cure, nor kill it, nor even scotch it. For the principle from which the evil springs is rotten; and till you superannuate it, and place a healthy one in its position, you may look in vain for a healthy result.

[This paper was written immediately before the late order from the War Office appeared. It will be seen, however, presently, that the argument remains intact. The word *punishment* may be substituted for *the lash* without weakening the writer's position; as, *under the circumstances stated*, he objects to the infliction of punishment at all, and not to the *degree of severity* with which that punishment is administered.]

If a man is blindfolded, and set barefoot, so to speak, upon thorns, where he was led to expect a carpet, a certain law may pursue and torture him for tearing off the bandage and flying from his persecutors;

but equity will turn aside, as he flies, and wink at his escape.

How does the matter stand? You give a certain sum to induce a man to be a slave: he finds *that* slavery, which the recruiting-sergeant represents as *barely* servitude, to be of the lowest and most irksome kind, without even the faintest ray of social sunshine to relieve the sombre aspect of his future; with no hope of advancement, beyond an extra penny or two per day, after years of stagnation and the deadliest monotony. He is enlisted (I will say nothing of what he has to go through during the various stages of acceptance by the authorities—perhaps a full sense of their degrading tendency is palpable only to a class of recruits who are above their influence). The recruiting officer wears a beard, smokes his pipe openly in the street, puts his stock into his pocket, and slings his waist-belt on his arm—a mere reckless sort of fellow, who drinks his beer with the green ploughboy and the haggard London starveling in an easy familiar way, suggestive of perpetual equality, or, at worst, of kindly authority. This seems natural enough to the green ploughboy and the city starveling, for both are Englishmen who “never will be slaves!” They get drunk, enlist, and shaving is then essential, pipes are unallowable, stocks become indispensable—even at meals—(of this anon) and the whole dream of *voluntary* servitude is dissipated, while the

reality becomes a constant nightmare and a heart-burn. The result is, as a matter of course, desertion; and the cure for desertion is—the LASH.

We start with the possession of the raw material which you have gained by dishonest dealing, and which has cost you money; he (the raw material) finds that you are a rogue (I do not mean to be personal, my lord), and he strives to quit your service; he succeeds, and you then offer a bribe to a rival servant—a policeman—to capture him. At this stage of the proceedings you have lost doubly. You get him back by force, and then punish him; in other words, render that state of life which was at first unpleasant absolutely unbearable. Surely, this is scarcely compatible with wisdom—with common sense? Putting humanity out of the question, and looking at it simply as a matter of business, it assumes a suicidal aspect, and must continue to have a suicidal *result*. It is as if a man were to cheat another in the sale of an article, then compel him to purchase again; and, lastly, to insist upon his becoming a *constant purchaser and consumer* of that article without grumbling. The reasonable mode of correcting the evil of desertion, my lord, which has grown to alarming dimensions, lies on the surface of the question. Expend the sums of money now lost to the country (as bribes for the capture of deserters), in rendering the home of the soldier more like that which he has left to become (as he

thinks) your voluntary guardian, but whose state the condemned convict would scarcely accept in exchange for his own.

It may be urged that desertion is chiefly practised with a view to secondary enlistment, and that, therefore, my assertion as to the cause of it, namely, discontent, falls through: nothing of the kind, my lord: it merely indicates that when a man has been swindled, he will—naturally enough—strive to make as much out of the swindler as he possibly can; and this the more readily in the case of the recruit, from the knowledge that exchange from one regiment into another involves only a journey, while re-enlistment is, to him, a positive pecuniary gain. Thus the country loses enormously: pays once to *get* an article, and then pays again to *keep* it; while the article becomes damaged in the barter, both morally and physically.*

* Every good foldier is such a valuable production that we can hardly be too careful of him. It is waste upon waste to have a large army, and, because it is large, to be careless about the means of maintaining it in the highest state of health, strength, skill, and general efficiency. A state should so behave towards its foldiers in all questions arising out of enlistment, disbandment, gratuities, pensions, and the like, that its justice, not to say its liberality, should never be doubted. A belief throughout the humbler classes, that the Government is considerate, or even generous, in such matters, is worth a large sum of money. What credit is to the financier, in the power of

A fact full of the utmost importance as indicating the internal management of the army, and the sense of degradation to which it can reduce a man devoid of that refinement of feeling which is exclusively confined to the educated, was reported some half-year ago in the newspapers.

A foldier had deserted, was captured, punished (not with the lash : this is a note-worthy fact), and released from prison. In a few days after he deliberately shot himself. It was said that he merely strove to injure himself sufficiently to procure a discharge. Even contemplated in this light, the incident is an awful one. That a man should be trepanned into a mode of life which he finds to be so heart-sickening as to drive him even to sacrifice a limb for the purpose of being free from it, is, surely, a melancholy fact, indicative of the necessity of speedy and wise change in the army system. As well hope to save a ship in mid-ocean, while the storm howls around her and her sailors remain in irons, by pouring a mere cargo of oil on the angry waters, as look to stem the current of discontent, and consequent desertion, by half measures of reform, or driblets of justice, such as those which have lately been issued by the Horse Guards.

raising money swiftly and upon easy terms, a good report of the nation's generosity is to the Government in the power of raising rapidly, upon an emergency, large armies. —“Essay on War.” *Friends in Council*. New series.

How would it be, my lord, with you, if, on the night of some important debate—I mean one on which *your* tenure of office depended—you were to discover that those members, on whose fidelity you trusted, had gone over to the “Tory” benches on the silly pretext that you really meant what you didn’t say, or said something which you didn’t really mean? How would it be with you on receipt of information that the country had, at last, come to a conclusion that considerations of sanitary reform, for instance, were of more importance than listening to your lordship’s funny speeches? The life of a soldier does not more widely differ from the life of a civilian than would your lordship’s feelings, in the event of either of the above suppositions being realised, differ *then* from those feelings which you experience *now*. One can generally form some estimate, my lord, of a nobleman’s mansion by the aspect of its entrance lodges; but, even though the avenues which lead to the very threshold of the military establishment are fraught with the rankest degradation, and environed by an atmosphere thick with compulsory, though unnecessary indecency, that man who could picture to himself the aspect of its inner life, even from such indications, must have a powerful imagination indeed.

I was told by a soldier (of some eleven years’ experience) on the day when I first entered a barrack-room, that I had “better have gone and hung myself

at once than do what I had done." He evidently believed that I joined the service with a hope, as high as his had been, of bettering my condition—a hope to him once sweet enough, but long before grown acetose.

Doubtless, you will look to find me advocating the necessity of superseding the "promotion by purchase" system considered in its relation to the common soldier. But you will effect nothing, or comparatively nothing, by throwing open the higher walks of military life to the subaltern; for the merits of those common soldiers who deserve promotion can, in my opinion, at all times be adequately recognized by the agency of exceptional legislation.* I have encountered but two men in the ranks—these two were gentlemen by birth and education—who desired to become officers.† The feeling of caste is as strong in the army as elsewhere—indeed stronger—the officer is neither beloved nor is his company desired by the men over whom he rules: of course there are exceptions, but they are rare, and only serve to glint a prospect which they do not sufficiently warm. The one officer in a regiment who is loved by his men, stands out in bold relief as the truest soldier in their estimation, even though

* It is notorious, however, that these merits have not been sufficiently recognized heretofore.

† Though my experience has been limited, still an average can be struck from the facts stated.

he never smelt powder but at a review. I recall one instance of such a one—the *only* one who, during my experience of the corps, never left a barrack-room without winning expressions of regard from its inmates. He frequently visited the sick wards of the hospital when not on duty (though his tendency to corpulence suggested rather an inclination to ease than a willingness to undergo self-inflicted exercise), pausing to chat familiarly with this man, or to inquire of that, who could, perhaps, read, what book he desired to borrow from the library; nay, more, he would himself order the book to be sent. Very likely this young man was a stock-subject of mirth at the mess-table of his brothers in arms, for he wore white kid gloves on parade sometimes, and had short legs. The model officer, my lord, in the usual acceptance of the term, finds a large field in personal peculiarities for the sharpening of such wit as he possesses—wit by which he makes capital among his fellows; just as some statesmen find in graver subjects a rich mine for the exercise of the same faculty.

When I hear a man advocating the abolition of promotion by purchase and find him silent on other points (each of far more importance) bearing upon army management, I am convinced that he is ignorant of the true state of the question, or purposely feigns to be so. The common soldier has no wish to emulate the gentleman save in

courage—though he likes, as has been frequently asserted, to be commanded by him ; but what he would hail heartily, in lieu of authoritative superciliousness, is a modicum of kindness, which costs the giver nothing, and the deficiency of which has more portent in it than the nation knows.

A soldier confided to me his reasons for wishing to exchange from the company to which he belonged into another — both were supposed to be under orders for the seat of war : they were, that he might have a better opportunity of sending the first bullet through the head of a hated officer. If he had wished to exchange for the sake of being nearer to an officer whom he loved, how different would the case appear ! My *technical* duty was to report this man, and have him lashed as an example ; but I satisfied myself by producing a slight impression on his moral feeling by very commonplace arguments, and I believe that I served the country better by such means. This man was rendered bloodthirsty (in the wrong direction) by the utterance of a few words, mostly blasphemous. The same number of words might have made him a devoted servant ; and, when we consider how much depends upon an individual, guiding head, in the midst of battle, we cannot fail to find food for deep regret in the fact which I have stated. The officer upon whose success, in a certain cause, whole centuries of civilisation depend, for aught we know,

may be one marked out for death by the hand of the soldier at his side.

It is not unworthy of note, that he of whom I have spoken bore a stainless character on the books of the corps. Do you suppose, my lord, that, in time of war, no officers, or but few, fall by the hands of subordinates? I should be *glad* to believe so too, but the premises from which we started lead to a far different conclusion. And the great misfortune is, that existing regulations furnish no clue whereby we may trace the evil to its root; for we cannot (we, the outside world) discover the officer who is marked, nor can we single out the marksman.

Now, it behoves the nation to consider whether any means, no matter how indirect, are extant, by which it may be enabled to discover that officer who possesses the knack of changing a loyal soldier into a malcontent by the utterance of a single sentence. This is very easily done. Let the present *system of salutation* be entirely superseded; at present it is essentially and egregiously absurd. The spirit of a salutation lies entirely in what it indicates: if it indicates nothing it is useless. When a man places his finger athwart his nose, my lord, or raises it to his hat, you know what he means; but, if all who passed you were *compelled* to salute, on pain of punishment, you would be as ignorant of your popularity as you are now aware of it.

The common soldier *must* mark his sense of proximity to finer cloth, no matter who wears it ; if he is seated, he must stand ; if standing, he must raise his hand. Can anything be so absurd ? Why should not he show his regard for an officer, or the reverse of it, by the same means as those resorted to in other communities, where the relation of ruler and ruled is as broadly defined ? You will feel inclined to say, perhaps, that this argument is absurd, because it is essential that certain ceremonies should be kept up, of which this is the most important, and because it would not be "the thing" to permit those soldiers who have a personal regard for our Queen to rush out of the ranks and kiss the hem of her garment ; or to allow others, who have a hankering after politics, to wink their eyes at your lordship, after a speech at the Mansion House. If what I propose resulted in such a state of things, I should agree with you that I had been uttering nonsense ; but a little reflection, backed by your lordship's knowledge of the anatomy of nonsense in all its phases, will show you that, after all, I am speaking something like sense. I will allow that it is not compatible with the dignity of rule that certain forms, however unmeaning, should be done away ; and I would have every soldier salute every officer, belonging to his corps or regiment, *when on duty*, without regard to personal feelings ; but I would not *compel* him to do so, under any circumstances,

when *off duty*: I would leave it then to the man's own free will. Thus you will see how a commander, having an interest in the welfare and happiness of his men (this latter phrase will raise a smile in certain quarters), would have some chance of discovering who was unpopular, and who was not. No officer is disliked by soldiers generally without a cause, or precluded from winning regard by the magnitude of the sacrifice necessary to obtain it; though he more frequently gives good grounds for the one than seeks to gain the other.

To sum up this question, my lord, you might, as it now stands, with as much justice presume your barber's scissors to be a poem, because it performs its functions in dactyls and spondees (with two short strokes and a long one, or with two long ones successively), as you can that the British officer is loved by every soldier because of the prevalence of a ceremony which indicates as much.

The present state of army management seems directly to contradict the assertion of Addison: "It is impossible to fix the measure of obedience without settling the extent of power." If a soldier be guilty of a crime, he is not even tried by a neutral jury, or sentenced by a disinterested judge, but is condemned by the very men against whom he may have raised his hand, and whose power has no limit short of death. I do not say that this is avoidable; but I do say that it requires the addition of many

qualities (common enough in the world, but too rare within the precincts of a barrack) to render it a civilising medium.

While alluding to courts-martial, I am led to consider more fully the system of punishment in the army irrespective of the lash.

I had not been long a soldier before I had ample opportunity of forming an estimate of its reprehensibleness. There were, in the same barrack-room with myself, I think some fifteen men, including the corporal in charge (the beds, by the by, stood, on an average, about two feet apart!). The corporal was not popular. A young recruit came in, one night, drunk, and used abusive language to him; whereupon he was ordered to the guard-room, the corporal sending for a file of the guard to escort him thither. After the lights had been extinguished, and the corporal had retired to his bed, suddenly a heavy regimental boot was hurled at him by a friend of the imprisoned soldier; it took effect, and also smashed a window by his bedside. The frightened officer jumped up, and made for the door; but while effecting his retreat, he was struck on the head by a second boot. He made his escape, however, and returned soon with a stronger body of the guard. Both missiles were found on the floor where they had fallen; but of course, as might have been expected, no one in the room would acknowledge them. A search was forthwith instituted, with a

view to discover the shelf which was short of the prescribed number of boots; and the occupant of the bed immediately under the suspicious one was placed under arrest, and taken to the guard-room. This, as far as it went, was right enough; but the corporal did not stop here. He expressed his determination to act in the like manner towards every inmate of the room if the guilty person were not immediately declared and repudiated. As the injunction was absurd, it could not be obeyed, consequently we were *all* ordered to the guard-room. I proved, to the fellow's satisfaction at last, that as the door-leaf opened *against* my bed, and as the second boot actually struck it, after glancing off himself, it was absolutely impossible that I could have thrown it. I proved, also, that I could not so have aimed the first as to break the window by his bedside. I escaped, therefore, as did also four others, for the same reason: the remainder were lodged in the guard-room. The man on whom suspicion fell, protested his innocence, asserting that he had exchanged from another corps, and had only been credited with a certain number of pairs of boots corresponding with the number found on his shelf. Routine required a week to get through the necessary formal inquiry as to the truth of his statement; but at last the guilt was brought home to him, and he was punished: meanwhile a number of innocent men were confined wrongfully at the caprice of an

ignorant corporal. They were forced to submit, also, to the indignity of having their hair cropped close (according to the custom at that time), as a reminder that they had been in the guard-room; while five others, including myself, were confined to barracks by order of somebody. This case speaks for itself, my lord, and needs no comment. I relate it as giving an instance of the power of a non-commissioned officer.

I was once taking a comrade's dinner to the hospital, when I was ordered back by one of these fellows, because I dared to cross the barrack-square without my regimental stock! The parade-ground was empty at the time, nevertheless I had to go back and "get myself up;" while a sick man's meal was growing cold.

So much for the power of a non-commissioned officer; and now as to the authority of a commissioned one. A young recruit was ordered to the guard-room, by either the colonel or lieutenant-colonel (I forget which), because he was seen drinking a glass of ale, after parade, at the bar of a public-house, with his chin-strap up—*i. e.*, over the crown of his cap—on one of the hottest Sundays of last summer; but he merely had his hair cut shorter, and was not further punished, being guilty only of a *first* offence (?) But this case, compared with others, dwindles into the merest nothing; for it simply indicates that *one man's judgment* is at fault, and not

the system. My lord, I fancy I can take ground from under the *system itself*, which it will require much sophistry to replace.

You are yourself a public servant, and, as such, have duties to perform which are, to a certain extent, accurately defined; and if the nation were to demand of you obedience to certain other duties differing widely from those appertaining to statesmanship, you would, no doubt, feel yourself—and justly—very much aggrieved. The soldier is a public servant, with duties more accurately defined than those of any statesman; and, when he is called upon to perform others not originally contemplated by him, he has an equal right to feel himself aggrieved.

I never, my lord, when I enlisted, supposed that I should one day, in company with five others, find myself compelled to drag a monster roller, for the gratification of my officers, backwards and forwards over a cricket-ground, for half a day—I say compelled, because I would have found myself in the guard-room had I refused to do so. I ought, at least, to have had the option of refusal, without fear of punishment for disobedience of orders. That so much power should be in the hands of any officer, my lord, is surely a monstrous evil. The expectation of a few pence presented as a gratuity to each man might have *tempted* many to undertake such a task; but there is a screw loose in the system which

oblige any man to put on slavery for the delectation merely of another.

The refusal, on my part, to accept threepence, coupled with an expressed determination to see both commissioned and non-commissioned officer undergoing a "state of probation" first, might have resulted in serious consequences to me, had not the latter individual a reversionary interest in overlooking my insubordination. It is enough, my lord, for a soldier to be brought into contact with those weekly filthy and loathsome businesses which it is his duty to encounter, but which a little sanitary foresight would render unnecessary; without forcing on him extra labour for private ends, the coerciveness of which is far more galling than the performance of it.

But, to pass from this to other matters.

In the square of my barrack there were two guard-rooms—the garrison guard-room and the barrack guard-room; the former was large and airy, but, during my experience, *empty*; the latter was small, badly ventilated, and always occupied—its size, at a guess, about $14 \times 14 \times 12$ feet, with a window about $1-6 \times 3$ feet, and a fire-place *blocked up*. There may have been ventilators in the wall, but I could not discover them. Routine never permitted the use of the larger guard-room to our corps or to any other, as far as I could discover, except on "state occasions," so to speak. (*Once*, when no provision had been made for an influx of recruits, it was

turned into an impromptu dormitory, and strewn with straw for one night.) I shall never forget the scene which presented itself to me, on first entering the smaller guard-room, with the bed and bedding of a delinquent comrade. The stench which met me when its double doors were opened by the man on duty was literally indescribable, and no wonder. On the floor were several human beings in a state of intoxication, wallowing in all those resultant effects which usually belong to it; while, in the centre of the room, stood the objectionable tub, as it had stood for many hours, giving off its effluent poison copiously. Two men were seated on the floor, holding food in their fingers, and tearing it with their teeth like beasts, for knife and fork were forbidden. What argument may we draw from these facts, my lord? Clearly, that those who most needed refining influences were the very men who were shut out from them.

If you treat a soldier like a dog, you cannot blame him for that progressive moral obtuseness which you have lent your aid to develop.*

* The following extract from *A Life for a Life* may be read with interest. The statements made in it are fully supported by facts—a sufficient excuse for quoting a work of fiction:—

“Dr. Urquhart was saying that the average mortality of soldiers in barracks was higher than that of any corresponding class of working-men. He attributes this to want

Branching off from the punishment system, let us examine other causes of discontent—for instance, frivolous censure. Take, as an instance of this, a remark of the officer on duty after officially visiting a barrack-room: “Why—don’t you have the ends of those forms on a line with the end of that table?” These words were addressed to the “orderly,” or “cook’s mate,” of the day, whose duty it was to keep the room in order. I had the anecdote from the mouth of the offended and crest-fallen soldier himself, who had gone through a laborious day of scrubbing and cleaning, in the hope that he might “take the shine out of his next door

of space, cleanliness, fresh air, and good food. Also to another cause, which you always find flourishing under such circumstances, drink. It is in barracks just as in the courts and alleys of a large city, wherever you find people huddled together in foul air, ill smells, and general wretchedness—they drink. They cannot help it; it seems a necessity!”

“To return to my poor fellows, my starving mechanics, caught by the thirteen-pence a day (*only fourpence of which they receive*), and after all the expensive drilling that is to make them proper food for powder, herded together like beasts in a stall, till, except under strong coercion, the beast nature is apt to get uppermost—and no wonder!”

“Dr. Urquhart surprised me by stating how small a percentage results from death in battle, and from wounds; and, strange as it may seem, the mortality in a campaign, with all its fatal chances, is less than in barracks at home.”

neighbour," as he phrased it, by winning a word of praise from his superior. One officer had a habit of running his finger-tip over the middle ledge of each door in search of dust; another a habit of shaking every bed to discover hidden pipes. (These innocent friends the soldier generally finds it necessary to protect about his person: he is allowed no box or trunk of any kind.)

I was myself told, by an officer on the daily inspection duty, that to appear without my stock in his presence was a breach of military etiquette, which would not be overlooked a second time. I was seated at my mid-day meal, which it was both uncomfortable and painful to swallow with the stock on. Warnings had been given me by my comrades that a reprimand would be the consequence of my discarding it *pro tem.*; but they were unheeded—for, in truth, raw soldier that I was, I could not bring myself to believe that so much inhumanity existed among my commissioned superiors. But opportunity was not long wanting to convince me of the presence of a spirit of even more flagrant cruelty than this. As the proofs of it are connected with my hospital experience, it is well perhaps that I devote a word or two to hospital management itself.

Tradition has handed down the belief that the hospital of the corps to which I belonged is merely a temporary one; but it were advisable, I think,

neither to inquire how many years it has been so, nor how many more it is likely to remain so. It consists of two rows (on two floors) of barrack-rooms, back to back, ventilated by openings in the partition walls, so that the foul air has free circulation from one room into the other. Each ward, truly, has a ventilator over its fire-place, of the usual size and pattern; but one can scarcely expect the atmospheric impurity to trouble these except on rare occasions. I was confined for, I think, five weeks in a ward where there was an escape of gas, which had existed long before I entered it; the fact had been reported and re-reported, time after time, to medical and regimental officers, without effect; and, when I left, the ward was in the same state as when I entered it, though there were, in the corps, gas-fitters who could have mended the pipe in half an hour—nay, even in the room itself was one, for many weeks. The repairs throughout the barrack were let, I believe, “on contract” to a builder in Chatham, though the premises contained the best mechanics in the country, who would have effected any repairs without extra cost to the nation; and who would have been rejoiced beyond measure to receive a little additional pay for doing so. Routine, my lord, Routine!

But, to return to the hospital. Can you believe—can any man, with the smallest spark of humanity—

believe that there are certain stated times *when only* the soldier's sickness is recognized by the authorities? Dou you know that at 9 in the morning he must be unwell, if *he is unwell at all*; or that he must *parade* at that hour to be *marched* to hospital? If he chooses to forget a soldier's duty so far as to be sick at any other hour, he may go to the hospital, and he *may be* admitted a patient by courtesy (if his case is too serious to be ignored) till 9 next morning; but he remains *without medicine, without clean hospital clothing*, pending the arrival of stated times and stated officials, who have a stated moment for signing and countersigning of various documents and books. Fancy, my lord, the feelings of a soldier, with a sense of cleanliness, who finds himself compelled to don the garments (even for an instant) of a comrade who has just been cured of some loathsome disease! This would have been my case, had not the severity of the accident which rendered me an inmate, rendered it also necessary that I should be immediately placed in bed; for, on entering the hospital, the soldier is bound, by rules, to at once divest himself of his regimental suit, which is sent to the orderly corporal for safety.* Because I

* It would not be fair, perhaps, to say that the medical officers were strictly and directly responsible for such a state of things. I have no doubt there was an abundance of clean clothing to be had; but I was forced to abide by the verdict of a pompous official, who pronounced the suit I

entered at an unrecognized hour (3 in the afternoon), my wound remained undressed till 9 next morning. I suffered very severely meanwhile. A fellow soldier (whose previous position in life was calculated to outweigh that sense of bashfulness which belongs to the common soldier while addressing an officer) succeeded in frightening a young medical subordinate into visiting me; but, as might have been expected, the result was *nil*. He looked at the wound (a burn on my foot), and suggested that oil and cotton would be the "right sort of thing," and left me. I sent the same friend, of whom I spoke above, to inquire for these things: there was no written order, nor indeed was there either cotton or oil in the store: the hospital "was just out of both!" Late in the evening an officer on duty inquired, as usual, if there "WERE-ANY-COMPLAINTS-TO-MAKE?" I complained, but *of course* without result. Had I fractured a limb, the case would have been the same, as far as the authorities were concerned. Next day, at 9 o'clock, my wound was dressed by the principal (and really kind-hearted) medical officer, who *sent into the town* for necessaries.

In course of time I left the hospital, and waited on the adjutant to obtain my discharge, which was exchanged, to be "only a bit crumpled." He would have had some little trouble in serving out a clean suit, and there was no redress for me.

pected. He, seeing from my appearance, that I had been on the sick list, went so far as to inquire into the nature of my injury, which I explained; and directed me to wait on him again at a certain hour in the afternoon. I did so, and was kept standing, by his order, for fully twenty minutes, while he sat perusing some papers of an official kind, and while a non-commissioned officer was engaged in procuring the important document which I sought. "Stand to attention, sir," said he (the adjutant), "while you are before me," or "before an officer"—or words to that effect, when he observed me shifting my feet. It was extremely painful for me to remain, just at that time, standing at all, much more so to remain in a regimental position; and he could not fail, moreover, to *see* that it was so—even had he not made any previous inquiry, for I wore a slipshod shoe. I have never come in contact with a combination of so much Routine and so little humanity concentrated in one short episode.

But, I was forgetting to speak of hospital dieting. A few words will contain all I have to say on that head. At a certain hour each day, the proper quantity of meat—that is, the proper *weight*, which is determined by the head medical officer, and officially supposed to be exclusive of bone—is sent from Fort Pitt, to feed the staff of attendant officers and those of the sick who are on that diet. When the former are served, proportionately to their great-

- nefs, the common soldier comes in, at second hand, for the bone and sinew. These aptly enough suggest his relation to the State, yet, still but indifferently conduce to a state likely to verify that suggestion.

I fear that I may have hurt you, my lord, by the tone of this letter, more because I have lingered so seriously and so long upon a serious topic, than for any other reason. I will make a sorry apology,

- however, by relating the following anecdote—"founded on facts:"—A certain man enlisted into the British Army, and began to complain on one and the same day; he remained in the army for many years, because he couldn't get out of it, and never ceased making complaints the while. At last the complainant died of a complaint without doing any harm to anybody, or having been done good to. But, on his death-bed, he wrote to the Horse Guards, making a complaint that his complaint had been wrongfully treated by the Sergeant-Poultice-Major of his regiment. This document the Horse Guards sent back to the complainant, requiring him to sign and fill up another document (therewith sent also) to the effect that he had sent the first. This was done by the complainant, who complained of having to do it. The Horse Guards sent back another document, to say that his complaint was "lodged in the proper quarter" (meaning the official one). While it was lodged there, and while some one was

seeing about it, and round it, and to it, but not into it, the complainant died and was buried. In about twelve months or so another document was sent after him, to give notice that he was to hold himself in readiness to appear before a regimental committee, which was to sit upon the Sergeant-Poultrice-Major and the Lance-Bandage-Corporal immediately. This document went to a man of the same name in Corfu, who returned to England in another twelve months, and who was tried and punished for doing so, under false pretences. The special committee, which is paid for its trouble, of course, is sitting still, with its collective arms folded, only waiting for the right man in order to settle the matter, and to reprimand the guilty officials, who meanwhile hold their own, pending judgment.

And now, perhaps, my lord, you may be able to undergo a serious word or two at parting. I take it to be the manifest duty of every statesman to legislate for his country as though he were the last of his class; to provide for her future as though she were a beloved child, who may find no guardian, guide, nor friend when he is gone, and yet may be subjected to insults because of the poverty to which he may reduce her by neglect. There are those, my lord, who hold that your greatness has reached its height—if so, I congratulate you; but I am at a loss to discover sufficient data on which to found an assumption that it is anything

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more than green : one age is poor applause, and—

“ In hoary youth Mathufalems may die.”

When the winter of age steals on a public man, before his statesmanship is ripe, it were well, I think, that he had recourse to some forcing method (for fruition's sake) ere the vigour leaves him and he dies, bequeathing no public benefit more long-lived than his memory. The political horizon is not bright, nor are the loomings large upon its verge. True, there is one man—I mean Lord Stanley—whose utterances, no matter when or where heard, have in them evidences of that earnestness of purpose, of which your lordship has given such abundant promise—but fate may deprive us of him sooner than he can be spared ; I would, therefore, my lord, strongly urge the necessity of your taking up such a question as this of Army Management immediately : it can be better legislated for *now*, and with a better grace, than when its aspect becomes indicative of a storm. As for myself, my lord, I care not for the censure I may receive, provided that the press and the country are led to take up the subject, and to thoroughly ventilate it.

“ The mighty critics will not blast for shame,
A raw young man who will not tell his name.
Good natured critics will the unknown defend,
And fear to blame lest they should hurt a friend.”

I have no excuse to offer for my boldness in addressing you, my lord, save a sense of duty. If I had one more likely to weigh with you, I would gladly urge it ; but, as I have not, I prefer rather to incur your anger (by seeming to intrude with so poor reason), than to contribute to your mirth (by putting forward duty as my best apology): the former, doubtless, I shall be able to bear, the latter needs no stimulant from any one.

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's most obedient, humble
servant,

CRUX.

PRESUMING the ranks to be recruited, as they undoubtedly are, by the voluntary system, I ask, is it fair that men should be lured into the service by false pretences—led, like sheep, to the flambles; is it honourable on the nation's part, or on the part of those who are the nation's representatives, thus to lure them? Does it tend to make better soldiers, or to foster discipline? Assuredly not. If the country were made aware of what the soldier has to undergo daily, in the way of petty tyranny, and perpetually recurring small annoyances, he would rise greatly in public estimation; while, were the state of things existent within a barrack, made known to him previously to enlistment, there would then be no tangible ground of discontent on his part or of complaint against the authorities; for he would join the army knowing well what he would have to bear, and what he would be called upon to perform.

Perhaps, then the service would sink to one-half its present strength; but that one-half would, at least, be composed of contented men, who would have slipped their necks into the halter of their own free

will. The ignorant men, who for the most part recruit the ranks, have never read the Blue Books which have been published, and which so astonished the kingdom some few years back ; nor do they know how to obtain them if so inclined.

It has been remarked (*Army and Navy Gazette*) that while disclosing many evils existing in the army, I have proposed no cure. This is not wholly just, though, to a certain extent, it is so ; for I have indicated the necessity of changes which I venture to think advisable—such as not retaining the system of compulsory salutation ; doing away, or curtailing, the power of non-commissioned officers, and confining the authority of commissioned ones to points of discipline relating strictly to the soldier's military duties, &c., &c. Still, I must confess, that the chief points of censure have root, as it seems to me, in the supercilious bearing, and dictatorial assumption of the executive, manifested by those wearing finer cloth ; and I can suggest no cure for this, which will have failed to indicate itself already to every right-thinking gentleman in the service, whether he has read my previous remarks or not. I have brought many charges against officers ; but I have in every instance supported them by facts ; I shall bring more, and support these also as I make them by and by, if the reader will follow me to the end, with a determination to weigh the evidence fairly and impartially as he proceeds. I shall not

detain him overlong, certainly not longer than the importance of the subject demands.

I stated that I had been compelled, with others, to drag a roller for half a day over a cricket-ground, at the command of an officer, and that I should have been punished for refusal. Why, in the name of the army, should I have been so compelled—why liable to punishment for objecting to perform a task purely civil, and in no way connected with a soldier's duty? Let it not be said that I cavil without reason, and merely because my pride over-rode my position, or that I was merely a discontented and an unwilling man: this was not so; for while older men expressed their feelings freely to *each other*, in no set terms either, I studiously avoided on that, as on every other and similar occasion, giving utterance to my thoughts, save privately, to those whom I called friends. If I so far departed from this course as to express dissatisfaction to the non-commissioned officer on that day, I did so beyond the hearing of the men. I invariably submitted with seeming willingness to whatever was demanded of me, from a feeling that to foster insubordination among members of a class (be they soldiers or civilians) always too ready to kick against conservatism and those above them, was unjustifiable in any man, no matter what position fate may have placed him in. I claim no credit for this; but I claim the right to be exempted from the censure which might

otherwise justly attach to me, and to be judged accordingly.

When the lights were out at night and the barrack quiet, I have waged many a hard and unequal fight against long odds in behalf of constitutionalism and authority. I remember well one dangerous Scotchman with whom I had to deal, whose knowledge of men and things had been gained exclusively from *Chambers' Education for the People*, and whose politics took their tone from a cheap weekly paper at war for ever with everything that makes this nation what it is. But it is not necessary to dwell upon the absurd and outrageous tenets which he advocated; though it may not be beside the question to indicate that it is in the power of the Horse Guards to lessen the influence of such men by wise legislation, and that it would be politic to do so.

When, on one occasion, four men, of whom I was one, were "told off" for the purpose of transferring the liquid garbage from a cesspool (or ash-pit, as it was called by courtesy) to the grating of a drain close by,* I remember that a debate was held among us as to whether we should perform a task usually committed to nightmen in civil cases. The corporal in charge had retired to his barrack-room—driven there by the stench—to enjoy a pipe,

* If the drains had been properly laid down, such a task would have been unnecessary, for surely the first principle of drainage is to render human agency superfluous.

which was, of course, forbidden to us who most needed it. At last it was I who first entered the pit and commenced the work, fully alive to the fact that incidental insubordination could effect no good, and would merely result in the infliction of still greater indignity. But we were not even provided with adequate, or any means of performing the duty; and were merely ordered to finish it by a certain time under pain of the guard-room, as a matter of course. We performed it, therefore, with the tub belonging to our barrack-room, which had to be used, and to remain in that barrack-room all the following night. When I say that I and another were ill for the remainder of the day, some idea may be formed of the healthfulness of that tub standing in the midst of fourteen men for several hours, used at the same time, as it was, for a purpose equally unwholesome. I was too unwell, and the others (not having a profound belief in the consequences resulting from its foulness) were too disinclined, to wash it or come in contact with it more than was absolutely necessary. Let me not be told that the officer in charge would *order* the men to cleanse it; this would be presuming him to be more enlightened than they. He *did not* order them to do so: indeed, why should he? Its exterior had assumed a regimental appearance after the application of a broom; what need, then, for further labour? Let it not be said either that the officer on the

(nightly) inspection duty would have "nosed" it, for he failed to do so; though if he had entered the same room at six in the morning, he, doubtless, would have remarked upon it. Will it be urged that we were ourselves responsible for any evil consequences resulting from its presence? Surely, no man but a regimental officer, having a slavish reverence for Routine, would hazard such an assertion, for common sense refutes it. Whether is it better that a soldier's health should depend upon his own regard for it, or be measured by the cost which the loss of it entails upon the nation? It were better, I think, that a system of drainage were adopted (to dwell upon the case we have been considering) which should meet the usual sanitary requirements, without the agency of human hands, and without the unnecessary endangering of lives which are injured by the public money.

I could name the sergeant-major who "told us off" for the above duty, point out the very pit, the very iron grating, and name my fellow-workers; for I make no imaginary statements in this paper, nor indicate no officer or private whose personality is a myth—though I have suppressed names for reasons which are obvious.

Let us pass on to other matters.

No provision is made by the governing classes for, or regard paid to the maintaining of that cleanliness which should go hand in hand with civiliza-

tion, and which is generally placed next to godliness. For while it is a very grievous offence to appear upon parade with a spot of rust upon a sword-blade, or the slightest stain upon a belt, nothing in the shape of a dishcloth is provided for the barrack-rooms, whereby the men might be enabled to clean their plates and basins, or their soup cans. A filthy rag (hidden away before the inspection rounds—generally in the coal-box—for the “gorge” of the officer on duty “would rise at it”) suffices not only for utensils, but also for dusting table and forms—which latter must be scrubbed daily “*by order*,” with brushes for the purpose. So scarce, and, consequently, so precious do these rags become, that, when a migration takes place among the men, from one barrack-room to another, they are invariably taken with them—precious heirlooms that they are—unless when the advent of a recruit indicates the probability of gaining possession of some clean unregimental shirt, which could be appropriated without danger or fear of punishment. To this “base use” did my fine linen “come at last.” Yet, most gladly did I aid and welcome the defecation—though, had I been longer a soldier, prudence, and a foresight of the future, would have tempered my generosity.

I can speak almost lightly of these things now; yet they were not trifling matters to me once, when the rejection of many a meal was the result of too

intimate acquaintance with them. Often, when the inner man was busy with me, have I secretly picked out a plate and polished it, before dinner, with the tail of my tunic, placing it at a particular spot, and anxiously keeping my eye upon it, while the non-commissioned officer portioned out the mess. And many a time has it been borne off by some other soldier, who little knew how dear it was to me, and how large the charity which did not hate him evermore—to him, perhaps, custom had made all plates alike; yet the measure of his enjoyment derived from the possession of that one plate, over and above the quantity of food allotted to him, bore but a weak proportion to my distress at losing it.

I could hope, for their own comfort, that all soldiers, save myself and a few, were indifferent on these points, were it not that to find them so would argue a very low and degraded stage of humanity. In time of war, and in the field, such things, being then incidental and unavoidable, would become unworthy the mention; but in times of peace, at home, and in barracks, they deserve, surely, some attention, and, in importance, take rank side by side with such questions as the suppression of intemperance and its concomitant vices—nay, they should rank higher; for in proportion as regard is paid to the comforts of a soldier's home will he be induced to remain in barracks, and thus to avoid those temptations which lure him to degradation!

It is curious to note that while fire-places must be black-leaded, walls whitewashed, and regimentals kept up to the highest pitch of brightness; that, while scouring brushes for floors, and button-sticks for jackets are provided at the expense of the public to maintain appearances, all the nicer and more important requirements for social polish are entirely ignored. These are not tangible enough, not palpable—they cannot be served out with a soldier's kit, nor pipe-clayed and furbished up, nor brought upon parade for inspection; a man can't be worried and badgered about them, and thus it is that they are not of the things that be. Common cleanliness would seem to demand that at least two dishcloths should be served out to every mess each week. The expense of purchasing these would be the merest trifle, for the material might be of the coarsest description, and the cost of washing would be absolutely insignificant. Let any civilian picture to himself the length of time it must take a soldier to "eat his peck of dirt," when one foul rag, if he be fortunate enough to possess it, suffices, as long as it holds together, to clean, say fourteen plates and basins (twice a day), two baking tins and soup cans, a table, and two or three forms. It is but fair to state, that in my barrack hot water was served out, but as the same boiler boiled also the vegetables and the soup, the supply was necessarily limited, and those who came last were invariably left without. I did not trouble

to ascertain whether my corps was proudly pre-eminent over others in this matter of hot water, as it was in many more ; but I know that a very small and judicious outlay, in any barrack, would have ensured a constant and unlimited supply.

I confess to having felt a fear, while the question of the abolition of flogging was being mooted, that after the terror of the lash had ceased, those men in the ranks who had borne a long accumulation of insult from the non-commissioned officers, would retaliate upon them, and thus frighten the authorities into rescinding the first instalment of justice through a dread of the insubordination which a summary vengeance might engender ; but I rejoice, for the sake of the army, that no instances have been recorded, sufficiently indicative to create alarm on the part of any well-wisher to the service. I should not have been surprised were the case different, nor surprised, were it so, to find the Horse Guards powerless to thwart or curb it by the reimposition of the lash—though, doubtless, its first step would be a backward one, for the logic of Routine penetrates as yet scarcely deeper than the surface. Yet recurrence to the lash would be as unwise in the event of a serious collision between non-commissioned officers and privates, resulting from its suppression, as it would be unfair to pass judgment upon the new and more human system itself till old scores are wiped away, and the new

generations, so to speak, of amenities which its working must give birth to, are called into existence. Had there been, in the time which has now elapsed since it came into operation, twenty reprisals in every regiment, instead of none in any, humanity would still continue to abhor the lash, and reason to consider its infliction as an exploded barbarism, producing in the concrete an unmixed evil.

Since corporeal punishment is, to all intents and purposes, doomed, and since its retention in the military code is but a question of not many years, it is perhaps unnecessary to dwell upon it at length ; but I think it would be as well to consider it, for a moment, from a point of view not very general, namely the effect that the partial manner of its infliction has had in engendering hatred of the upper classes. Look at it as we may, there is still no moral reason why a common soldier should be flogged for a crime which an officer may commit with comparative impunity. It does not suffice to say that the one is a boor, the other a gentleman : both are flesh and blood ; and, when both are criminals, he who has had all the advantages of refinement should be of the two most severely and ignominiously punished. It may be asserted, as indeed it usually is, that the punishment he receives is sufficient, since, because of his refinement, he feels it as acutely as the soldier does his ; but this is begging the question, for wise legislation establishes a claim

to perpetuity in proportion as it meets the requirements of an aggregate of men, and deters the majority by the sacrifice of one—meeting out judgment not by the suffering of the culprit, but by the magnitude of the crime. Martial law alone shows a deference to worldly position, since to those in position it owes its existence. Surely in the army, as elsewhere, the question should be, not so much what the relative feelings of two criminals are, but rather how far—the crimes being equal—a sense of judicial fairness may be promoted among the wavering ignorant, and verified by an equal award of chastisement. Till the soldier is brought to a pitch of education equal to the gentleman's, he will continue to look upon him as favoured by the gentlemen who judge him; and, till the officer is not withheld from committing the crimes of a blackguard by the dictates of his finer feelings, he is not adequately punished save by a blackguard's doom. If a private soldier merits flogging for a theft, so also does an officer.

It is to be regretted that the medium of communication between the two is centered in the non-commissioned officer, who owes his position to the favour of his superior. For many causes of complaint and dissatisfaction are personal to the non-commissioned officers; and that impartiality which is heroic cannot be expected of them, while many reasons combine at the same time to render them retaliative—and the opportunities for retaliation are as

numerous as they are untangible and galling. The foldier is completely in their power, to his own comfort or annoyance, according to whether he is docile or demurrent to their will.

The non-commissioned officer has been, we know, a private once, and the private may therefore attain the same dignity; but the recommendations for promotion come from the former, and naturally enough those men are selected who have been the toad-eaters of their respective companies. This is not always so; but while the present system lasts it must be *mainly* so. Occasionally, but only occasionally, men in the ranks assert their superiority so clearly that their officers cannot fail to recognise it. Proficiency in drill, *and then* the educational test, among those persons otherwise equal, should be the main road to preferment; the power of nomination, therefore, should be withdrawn from the present class of non-commissioned officers, and the officers themselves should select the candidates. It is no excuse to say that the subordinates have more opportunities for observation; because the officers of every company should have abundant opportunities—if they cannot make them they neglect their duty to the crown. The corporal who drilled my squad was simply an unmitigated ass, though he was the son of a sergeant. When I was proposed, unknown to myself, by a non-commissioned officer who was well-disposed towards

me, as a fit man to be promoted from the ranks, I was set aside, on this corporal's assurance to his fellows that "he thought I KNEW TOO MUCH." He arrived at this conclusion thus:—It is customary for the drill instructor, when a batch of recruits are committed to his care, to take down the names of them, their birthplaces, and the counties to which they belong, then to fill up a return containing these items, arranged in tabular order, to head quarters. While the worthy in question was performing this duty for my squad, I found that he was literally unequal to the task, gross ignorance beset him with the first man, and he set down towns for counties, and counties for towns in a most hopeless jumble. I helped him out of this difficulty and was ordered to "fall out" for the remainder of the day, in order to prepare his returns for him. This I did—glad enough of the respite; and thus I learned that a knowledge of the rudiments of Pinnock's Geography became a bar to my advancement. Yet he bid fair, in course of time, to be a sergeant-major; and perhaps the very accuracy of the return which I compiled for him may be a stepping stone to his preferment. The document exists still, I have no doubt; and my handwriting, if need were, would bear testimony to the truthfulness of the statement. The cure for such a state of things must be radical and sweeping; though the advantages resulting from a wise altera-

tion might not be fully apparent to the present generation—in fact, till a different class of men were fostered, by the change, and numerically exceeded the old ones. The inauguration of a new era is in the hands of the officers; but it has lain there dormant for too long, and it therefore behoves the country to compel them to tighten grasp upon it—coercive measures are called for by the existing state of things.

While I am on the subject of promotion from the ranks, I may as well give a second instance of the inefficacy of the present system as a criterion of merit—or, rather, an instance of how it falls short of perfection from a want of the civil element, and from an over formality and excess of method in its chiefs. It would be unjust to say that the educational test is ignored wholly by the military rulers; but to thoroughly meet the case the test should be subject to no accidental variations in itself—as a metre, it must be fixed and stable, or its index will be influenced by extraneous disturbances brought to bear upon it perhaps for private ends. To be healthy it must have air too, but not that equable draught admitted through inlets whose machinery is Routine and whose cordage is Red Tape; it must be blown upon by a free current more indicative of the atmosphere without than is that which filters through such channels. I mean that the system should be subject, for instance, rather less to regi-

mentally appointed hours, and times of inspection, and more to uncertain and frequently differing ones. A teacher should not only know that returns will be expected from him on such a day, and reports on such another, that a certain officer (whose peculiarities he will master in the course of a few months) will visit the school-rooms and go through set forms of inspection; but he should be led also to fear visits frequently, changeable and searching scrutiny, and *unregimental* droppings-in from any officer or civil functionary, connected with any educational department of the state. I may be here met by the assertion that any officer can now inspect the schools at any hour: this is not enough; for I answer the assertion, as I have answered another previously, the result does not support it; Routine, and the broad track which that has beaten, are the guide and road still followed.

The following and concluding piece of my personal experience is extremely significant:—A non-commissioned officer connected with the school, and who had been for some time in charge of the room in which I lived, sent for me one day after parade. When I arrived, he was engaged in earnest conversation with another teacher (also a non-com.), but before many minutes had elapsed, I was ordered to be seated, and had a *Return of Attendance* for the previous month, together with a blank form, placed before me, and was instructed to fill up the latter

according to its fellow, placing the names of the men and the number of marks against them, upon the *new* paper as they stood upon the *old*. While I was performing the task, a search was being instituted by the two officers in desks and among documents. "Oh, it's all right!" suddenly exclaimed he who had not sent for me, "I've found it." Presently another blank sheet was placed before me with the newly found and *correct return for the month just then expired*, and directions were given me to discard the first set, and make a fair copy of the last. I learned from a remark which I overheard, and coupled with the inference to be drawn from what I have just related, that these officers had mislaid the *true return*, and supposing it to be lost, were actually about to send in a *false* report of progress.

Now, the number of marks against a soldier's name were supposed to indicate his chance of promotion or otherwise, according to their number; so that in this case, a recruit, who might have joined at the beginning of that current month, and attended school every day, would not only *not have been credited* for his diligence and proficiency, but he stood a chance of being doubly wronged by the promotion perhaps of another man who had absolutely not attended once in the same time, and might never attend again—as is frequently the case.

The thought will perhaps strike the reader, that, taking the matter as it stands, it will be almost

impossible to insure honesty, and to provide for moral contingencies which, however evil in their results, are almost necessarily intangible and incidental to humanity. Broadly considered, this is true; but, yet I venture to think that by changing the system, and working it on a different principle (as I have hinted already), better officering is possible. I know there were *not one or two only*, but very many privates in the ranks in every respect superior to the best non-commissioned officers commanding them; any one of whom, placed in the same position, would not have hesitated a moment to say to their superior—"I have lost the return which you require; but I can name the soldiers and recruits who have acquitted themselves most creditably, and are most deserving of your notice." These two fellows were ready to commit a foul wrong, and practically to perjure themselves, rather than to acknowledge that one of the commonest infirmities of human nature had found a lodgement in their martial breasts. Both lied readily, because Routine held it a crime of greater magnitude to mislay a paper. Had the false return been sent in, I should most certainly have reported these men, who would then have been stripped of their stripes no doubt, while I should have remained a private, with the earnest of being long time subject to every indignity in the power of their fraternity to inflict upon me without danger to themselves.

THE ARMY.

To the Editor of the Constitutional Prefs Magazine.

SIR—Will the Prefs hold aloof from the consideration of the foldier's wrongs till some lieutenant-colonel fhall come forward to declare their exiftence, or indicate their cure? And is the nation fo to be kept in ignorance *for ever*, or at leaft until bitter experience fhall enlighten it, and the foldier's tried temper be taxed beyond forbearance and control?

It has been doubted that the facts which I ftated on the army laft month are *bonâ fide*; and hence a reafon, and I muft therefore allow a plaufible one, has been found for withholding criticifm upon them. With thofe who doubt ftill, a reiteration of mere affurances will not go for much; but you, fir, hold in your poffeffion that document which is proof pofitive of my fincerity—you have my difcharge. You will, I am fure, willingly exhibit it to any editor or critic who may be inclined to feek fatisfac-

tory information as to my personality and antecedents, so far, at least, as my right to speak of army management is involved. My character is also vindicated upon the same parchment.

The editor of the *Army and Navy Gazette* at once recognized the vast importance of the article to which I allude, and did not hesitate to aver that I *must* have been in the ranks, for there only, he says, very truly, could I gain that information which I have sought to impart. Still the editors of other influential journals, whose experience of the service has necessarily been limited, profess that they cannot believe in my truthfulness. And why? Simply because, sir, the state of things which I describe is so horrible, so inconceivable, as to partake more of the nature of romance than of sober reality. Will these gentlemen satisfy themselves that I am no impostor? They owe it to their calling and their country, not to me, to do so. I looked for support from them, and I still hope they may yet see the absolute necessity of giving it. I tell every individual member of the Press, not dictatorially, but with a strong sense of duty—that there exists in England a clique of slaveholders and a community of slaves; and I assert that it is obligatory upon journalists to subvert the power of the one, and to emancipate the other. That which I said towards the close of my paper I repeat:—"For myself, I care not what censure I may receive, provided the

Prefs and the country are led to take up the subject, and to thoroughly ventilate it." It can avail me nothing if the paper is ignored: I shall still remain nobody, but it may affect the nation much to consider it in time. I only ask a hearing for those statements. I simply challenge the authorities to come forward and officially contradict a single assertion of mine. I call upon any reader of my previous paper, who has calmly and dispassionately considered it, to answer whether he has not rather believed me an impostor, for the sake of human nature and the British officer, than found internal evidence to convince him that I am one. It has truth upon the face of it: it *must* have, for it is true; and it is, moreover, full of the utmost importance from the nature of its disclosures. I am not egotistical in speaking thus, for any merit it possesses is based upon an experience of circumstances which were peculiar perhaps, but nevertheless mostly extraneous to mere individuality.

I have been charged with bitterness of spirit by some, and I plead guilty to it, as indeed I must; but, sir, the subject is a bitter one to me, and I lack that tact, mayhap, which can glose an unpleasant truth in pleasant words, and round it off in inoffensive periods: lack, in fact, that which only years can give, but of which I now recognise the necessity—a certain social insincerity, not therefore

insincere. I was a stranger to that which Richard Savage characterized as—

“A pensive mildness born of patient thought.”

From the moment when I took pen in hand to the moment when I laid it down, I had no time for patience or for thought. The paper was begun on a Saturday night and finished before Monday morning: for the calls of business demanded that I should not return to it, and I could not keep it by me, for its presence robbed a master of work which was his due by the resultant nervousness which it occasioned me. Possibly, I could not put together another paper of half the length in as many weeks as that one required hours; but the matter was, as it were, ready, and when I wrote, I wrote as I felt, and I addressed myself to a Prime Minister whom I did not respect for a talent which could convert the gravest complication into groundwork for an impromptu *feuilleton*. Yet I am less of a Democrat than a Tory, and perhaps more of a Whig than either.

But, sir, in that paper I have not exhausted the subject, nor run short of facts! Many horrors are present in my memory still; but the disclosure of them cannot aid the cause, if what I have already written falls silently upon the public ear. Is it because nothing of all this has appeared in Blue Books that I am not to be credited? Is it not prepos-

terous to suppose that the common soldier who may be called upon by Government and summoned to appear before a formidable committee, will stand up and criminate those on whose good will his promotion and advancement depend? The question is answered by the fact that the heads of the army have remained uncriminated heretofore. I bid those heads now to deny, if they have the temerity to do so, that I have been harnessed like a beast to a roller, and compelled to traverse a cricket-ground for their pleasure and not the nation's benefit; that I entered the hospital one afternoon with an injury which detained me there five weeks, and had no medical attendance till nine next morning; that there is a sick parade at that hour when men "fall in," and are marched to hospital; that at that hour, and *that* only, the orders for medicine are made out and signed; that the guard-room is what I have described it; that the power of the non-commissioned officer is as great as I have stated, and that the facts upon which I ground the statement are true; that the commissioned officer is not a gentleman as exemplified in his bearing to inferiors.

One circumstance only can they attempt to palliate—my hospital experience. They may say perhaps that young medical subordinates visit the building twice a day; to which I reply that these are like all ostensible boons to the soldier, ostensible merely—for show not for use. I want a written denial

that there is one hour *ONLY* for official entrance to the hospital, and one hour *ONLY* for the distribution of medicine ; a denial that there is *not* an official place in the barrack where a doctor can be found when wanted, and that he is *not necessarily* bound to attend when discovered, unless at stated hours. I want them to deny also that the pewter utensils, polished by the sick men, turned upside down at the foot of each bed, and garnished with the regimental blacking brushes on top, and the regimental shoes at each side, are more for show than use, and that the objectionable tub is placed in the centre of each ward, after eight o'clock at night, to be then the receptacle for poultices, bandages, and things of the like sort, appertaining always to the sick. Who can wonder that the soldier's life is shorter than the printer's? The public are admitted to the wards at noon : there is no tub then.

Say you, sir, that if these things were so, the soldier would have remonstrated with his officers ere this? Do you know that he speaks not to any officer, unless he be introduced by a non-commissioned one, who would not surely risk an introduction for such a purpose.* What does the latter care ; he

* “ Amongst the modern military changes there is one which has been gradually introduced in a number of regiments, by gentlemen who are usually called ‘martinets’—not soldiers, only martinets, who would not let a poor soldier eat his dinner his own way, if he could help it.

has risen from the ranks by the favour of his officer,

The innovation is that of prohibiting a private soldier addressing his officer unless in full uniform, and accompanied by a non-commissioned officer, also full dressed! This is a very dangerous innovation; it is digging a ditch between the officers and their men! When I was a regimental captain any man could speak to me when he pleased, and consult me about his affairs: I tried to be the friend of my men as their immediate chief. If they complained of a non-commissioned officer, or of any man, they had to bring that man to me, and I heard both stories. As commander of a regiment any man aggrieved complained to his company's officer, and if he got no redress, captain and soldier came to me, dressed or undressed: if the captain refused to come, the soldier came alone, and I sent for the captain, as I never listened to a complaint except in presence of, or through an officer.

"But of late years the martinets have altered this the old custom, and a private soldier dare not go to his officer, except in full dress and with a non-commissioned officer! At least it is so in many regiments, and the men in them are at the mercy of the non-commissioned officers, who, as all officers know well, will, like other men, often play into each other's hands, and oppress the man who complains. Moreover men often want to speak to their officers without having a complaint—to ask his advice, or some small indulgence: and this enables the officer to see character, to show personal interest, to encourage or correct. This new custom cuts them off entirely: instead of promoting confidence between officer and private it changes it into disgust; and except in cases of great anger, when the private goes with a red-hot complaint, he will not speak to his officer at all!"—Gen. Sir Charles James Napier. *Journal*, April 27, 1851. In *Life and Opinions of Sir C. J. Napier*, by Sir W. Napier, vol. iv., pp. 325-6.

and his life and duties are things apart. I was once introduced to my superior officer (the adjutant of whom I have spoken elsewhere—the adjutant of the detachment), the corporal cried “Halt!” stood while I talked (about two days’ leave) and told me to “Right about face, quick march,” when I had done.

Men who have enlisted as good mechanics, under the assurance that their services would be required as such, and paid for accordingly, have been “told off” for the most degrading duties, for which they received 4*d.*, in the presence of civilians who have been at work in the barrack square (at the standard wage of tradesmen) and who have done that which the soldier dare not do—namely, *paused* to look on and wonder at the scenes which were being enacted around them. These were employed and paid by a builder; the others were swindled by military delegates, and chained to slavery.

The soldier, when he receives from the store a regimental stock, is sometimes compelled to cut it down, and then burn the edge of it with a red hot poker, to hide the marks of the knife. I treated mine so, according to custom. One day we were called on to “show stocks” on parade; the adjutant (the same one still) inspected mine closely, bidding me turn, and re-turn it, till he was satisfied. “You have been cutting that, sir,” said he. I did not answer. “Sergeant, here! What’s your name, sir?”

(to me). "Cruz." "Charge him with a new stock!" "Yes, sir." And I *was* charged.* Sir, will you still doubt because I surprise you more? In heaven's name! rather believe and cease not till you have overturned this infamous system. And see you that, when once you take the matter up, you thoroughly cleanse the Whited Sepulchre at once and for ever. Why, the very periodical inspections by the commander-in-chief are nothing more nor less than a hollow mockery; for he gives previous notice to the officers, who give notice to their subordinates, who immediately set about ordering every description of cleaning and whitewashing to be done forthwith.

I hail with the utmost and the largest pleasure, the spread of the volunteer movement through the land; because I see in it the antidote to military slavery and degradation, because I recognise in it, at one and the same time, the manly heart-throb of that nation's life which fought at Agincourt and Inkermann, and the spirit which may submit to necessary discipline and the calls of duty, yet not always to the interested dictates of a clique. Not alone is it noble, because it promises freedom from the enemy abroad, and is the assurance of a lasting peace; but

* The second stock I, of course, treated like the first, for comfort's sake; but escaped discovery, having taken lessons in the art from a practised hand before I ventured a second time.

because it is the nucleus of that which shall ultimately impart a healthy tone to military legislation, give status to the soldier, and inflict a final death-blow to Red Tape. I can now enlist without ignominy—be a patriot without disgrace; and I feel that, however much the movement may be thwarted at present, it will ere long, under genial patronage, become an institution of which England, of all nations, should be proud, and which a free people only may foster but not fear. May it long remain strange to that excessiveness of Routine which clogs the development of its sister service, and saps its sense of freedom at the core.

I am, Sir, your most obedient Servant,

CRUX.

How the editor of a print having the standing and circulation of *Punch* can so forget the responsibility which attaches to his position as to adopt, in speaking of the Volunteers, a tone which even the merest hacks and half-castes of literature who contribute to the lowest periodicals have refrained from following, is, to my poor thinking, most inconceivable. The course followed by one of the artists connected with that paper, whose powers might be better employed, is surely very base. No man of sense, who calls himself an Englishman, can find food for anything but pride in the contemplation of a Volunteer regiment; and the artist who prostitutes

his genius for the express purpose of remorselessly hunting out and showing up the weak points of the movement at the expense of justice and common fairness,* merely to produce a laugh, is barely worthy the name of Englishman. If the movement were a bad one, or if he believed it to be so—which he cannot; if its faults were salient, obtrusive, predominant, and apparent above its obvious merits, there might, then, be some excuse for such a man. But, to sneer at those who are devoting themselves with perseverance to the acquisition of an art which they do not know, *merely because* they did not intuitively know it *before they began to learn*; because some are stout and others thin, some tall and others short, is despicable to a degree. As to the assertion that volunteering is but child's play—the term is either meaningless or it is praise; for, to the child play is an earnest work, as much as is the professional labour to the man of business. The phrase, in *its common contemptuous acceptance*, has long since been refuted by the spirit and energy displayed by the Volunteers. No other country dare, with such confidence and so little fear, place 130,000 rifles in the hands of 130,000 subjects; therefore, if for

* In *Punch*, of June 16th, is an instance. A company of Volunteers is depicted, having a little man of about five, placed between two of apparently six feet—as if such a case ever really occurred. Did the artist not know that Volunteers are sized?

no other reason than for the lesson which it teaches, and the moral which may be drawn from it, it is worthy the respect of every true-hearted lover of his country. The artist whose nationality and patriotism are overbalanced by his sense of the ludicrous, should find in the study of himself subject-matter for a volume both comic and unique.

BARRACK THOUGHTS

AND

OTHER POEMS.

“ We learn by Suffering what we teach in Song.”

SHELLEY.

BARRACK THOUGHTS.

*The ripening breezes float among the trees—
A leafy languidness is all around,
And autumn plays a-tinting with the leaves.
I pause amid the beeches on the wold,
While o'er me steals the mem'ry of my hopes—
A withered troop well known but welcomed not !
Pale phantoms of old deeds and gone resolves,
Crowd on my pathway, forcedly and oft ;
I stand confronted by their gathered griefs—
For they have grown from boy dreams into fears ;
I hear their death-notes in my weary ears,
And dare not stay nor stop them if I would :
Their looks are pregnant with a mute reproof.*

A tearful tale is told by every wind,
A palsy shakes the fingers of the trees,
And dewy tear-drops linger on the grass.
There lurks a silent sadness everywhere :
It steals on all enjoyment, constantly ;
The secrets that we breathe not, *it* hears well—
They're talked of by the beeches on the wold,

They're uttered in the sighing overhead,
The sad, soft, fullen, melancholy breeze,
Relates them alway to the drowsy trees,
The babbling brook declares them to the dell—
And doleful voices speak, as I depart,
“Thou canst no more be happy, nor be free!
Ambition starves thee : Beggar, and be proud !”

I fling defiance back among the boughs !
And leave them for the sunset on the hill.
No Prophet wanders o'er their rotting leaves—
They are too dead to hurt me ; and their shades
Are but the semblance of their own despairs !
The sighing wind grieves only for the Spring—
I have no oneness with it—I can laugh !
The glorious sunset flushes me with joy—
Why must I not be happy, nor be free ?
The gaunt limbs, surging ever, answer me :—
“Thy hopes are setting with yon golden orb.
A lengthening shadow dogs upon thy heels :
'Tis but the semblance of thine own despairs !
Thou canst no more be happy nor be free—
Thou 'st nothing to be proud of—”

“But my pride !

And pointed fingers 'mong the brutish crowd,
I pass unheeding, for I still am—proud !”

Hope thuns the threshold of my coming years :
There is no entrance for herself or fears.

I shut my thought up, like some felon vile,
Debarred from light and air, in dungeon pile.
Bodements of evil force their company,
And come like furious faces, strange to me.

But I no more may live by merely seeming !
I leave for nobler things ignobler dreaming ;
While hope, that needed action for achievement,
Steals softly back to lead me from bereavement ;
While grief plucks off the garments it has worn
And pride no longer bears what she has borne.

The heart (which should be monarch of the man),
Though crown'd by diadem of good resolve,
Is conquered oft and ruined in its fall—
Bearing the weight of sceptre and of ball,
Oppressed by purple, panoply, and state.
Those hopes which were the courtiers drop away,
And leave but empty offices behind.
Funereal stillness, chronicled in tears,
Usurps the splendid pomp of former years ;
While some thought-tyrant revels o'er the wreck,
Weak deeds the serfs who follow at his beck—
Grim graves-men chanting while they work at
dooms,
And change the noblest structures into tombs !

Is it a vision wrung from my despair ?
I know the colonel sleeping there,

Above me, in the barrack square—
 I'm sentry here below !
 His rest is free from common care,
 His lids are sealed in slumbers rare—
 I'm pacing to and fro,
 Athwart the barren barrack walls,
 A slave to pompous trumpet calls !
 Almighty metal, what art thou,
 That lack of thee debases ;
 That thou canst freeze the haughty brow—
 Avert familiar faces ;
 That thou canst curb another's v ow,
 Or sever kindred races ?
 Why am I sentry here below—
 Why is he stranger *now* ?

Speak to me, spirit of my distant love !
 (Thou 'rt surely her bright essence from above)
 Why dost thou visit me at dead of night,
 Frighting the pale moon by a purer light—
 Thine arms outstretched to the vacant air,
 As though departed dreams were floating there ?
 Thou canst not leave me silently—oh, stay !
 She passed me never—stood not gazing so !
 Her fair cheek flushes with a softer glow,
 If I but part her arm's length, for a space,
 To catch the rays of love-light, from her face ;
 This large hand steals within her tiny palm,
 Resting a moment, and with impress calm,

Traces filk tremblings, with its finger tips,
Adown her arm ; and off her shoulder dips
Into a sea of hair that, lingering, clings
About my loving touch in fairy rings.
Thou look'st reproachfully, yet will not speak !
Why com'st thou thus, my troubled rest to break,
Invading, by thy presence, my lone doom—
Claiming a sad plenipotence of gloom ?

Love soars beyond description, up to God.
Its chiefest converse is all silent here :
Its pæans pass, unheard, from soul to soul ;
Its breath is thick with language, but, in vain,
The ear essays to hear it—catch the strain.
No poet e'er described another's heart.
I've looked upon the sun with eager eyes,
And lost him wholly in excessive light :
I've looked upon a bright face, like that sun,
And have been blinded away, since that time.

Lone, with the shades of evening, oft I sit,
Breathing a soul-draught from the distant
hills,
Which, with a cheering influence, ever fills
My heart to overflowing. Fancies flit,
In twilight's calm, around me ; and I drink
Full deep of memories, I fain would link
With one face very lovely ; but the night

Draws a dark veil above me—thick and fast,
My airy fancies merge into the past.
Thus does a sadness gather o'er the light
We fain would cherish for a long delight ;
Thus are the visions, we have called our own,
By some sure-coming sorrow overthrown—
Lost in the gloom of all-destroying Time,
That passing ever, cuts a deeper line
Across the brow of boyhood, pencilled fine ;
And steals our young aspirings upward to the skies,
For age to gaze alone on, with weak rheumy eyes,
And heart-clogged, through long vista'd years of
mute surprise.

How beautiful thou art, yon peaceful moon !
My grief is one with thee ; thou art methinks,
Like that bright love I sigh for constantly,
Thou shin'st so clearly in the else dark night,
E'en as she shines upon my gloomy thoughts,
And glints them through dark avenues of tears,
That sparkle into gems of faded years !
As holy priest, in dim cathedral pile,
Hearing a frail one speak of how she fell,
Brings her some hope, some refuge from the
past—
Brings her, on bended knees, to God at last—
Thou'st been to me. As when, in ancient Rome,
Poor slaves had, sometime, privilege of speech,

When they did pour their woes out to the State,
So speak I all my grievances to thee,
More happy for thy hearing, though not free.

Thou, too, must surely grieve, sweet moon,
When that fair star thou lovest fades away
And leaves thee lonely, in the misty morn,
To gaze on rival glories, Phœbus-born ;
Or when dark clouds, at even, hem thee in,
Like those black sorrows in the midst of joy.
That mar our golden thoughts with base alloy,
Hide hope behind them ere the goal is won,
Or rise betwixt us and the setting sun.

I've staked my fortune, as men draw the sword,
Encamped before a fortress, which is fate ;
Flung grief, like scabbard, o'er the leaguered wall,
And strive without for entrance. If I fail,
New griefs like other scabbards are abroad—
The worst is only sheathing, and an end.
'Tis but to hazard *nothing* : 'mid the strife
I stand accoutred, waiting for the worst.
Grim halos of aspirings false to me,
Are mingled with the future ; and the air
Is lambent with war watch-fires and distress,
But I'm too full of loss to nourish care !

A soldier's death is but to shorten years :
His noblest triumph is to conquer fears !

No reason lives that meets not something drear—
None live to many years who do not fail,
Or who for hope departed do not wail ;
From the weak infant in the nurse's arms,
To him who stakes an oath, to breathe alarms.
Prize fighters are poor heroes, and their deeds
But holocausts to matter—nothing more ;
For he who fells an ox may kill a brother,
And be less near to Godhead than another,
Who, from his dusty parchments and old books,
Evolves a thought that grows upon the world.

Yet are ourselves chief foemen to ourselves :
There is no enemy like that we are,
The war-fiend dwells within the heart of things—
The wintry blast attacks the sickly leaves,
That tremble at its coming ere they die—
We cannot pause upon a summer eve,
Amid the stillness of the evening air,
Or ponder by a calm lake peacefully,
Without a soft sensation of unrest.
Spasmodic bubbles rise in mutiny,
And burst, like silent war shells ; or mayhap
The restless beetles dash themselves to death,
Without or cause or reason, but for strife.

We need *not* less of heads, but *more* of hearts,
And greater energy to conquer—HATE.
Most things are pitiful, but *none* all base ;

For stagnant pools reflect the light of Heaven,
And roses bloom upon an offal heap.
Like stones have raised a brothel and a church;
And we have seen bad faces like our friends'.
Each step to worldly wisdom something numbs,
Of finer feelings for the finite world.
Who would not live because these things are so;
Or would not battle with excessive woe?
Great deeds are done by men in every clime,
With names unuttered by the tongue of Time;
Who die unchronicled, yet die possessed
Of kingly attributes; who sink to rest,
Without reward or trophy—nothing save
Unfulfilled honour mourning by the grave.
Those are not conquered ones who will not yield;
Though wounds have laid them on the battle-field,
And they go down to earth without a name,
They may be worthy though they find not fame.
Some, if they be not great, are always rueing:
The truly great are those for every doing.
Yet even these have left their work undone,
And what they strove for chiefly, have not won.
Perfection halts and wavers: life is brief—
The thought is sadness; but all thought is grief!

I would be rid of thee, thou happy past,
Or see the future like thee. Can it be?
Is nought but thy remembrance left to me?
Yet will I hope for hopes I may not know—

I cannot lay old spectres : be it so !
If new years be not what the past have been,
And I no more may see what I have seen ;
True friends are friends for ever : never, yet,
Was he forgotten who would *not* forget.
And thus I strive to keep my "memory green,"
And sigh for those I love, and think what I have been.

Yet though the fruits are bitter and unripe,
There is a sense of loading on the tree ;
I cannot choose but rid me of the weight,
And therefore woo thee gentle poesy—
"That am not yet a glorious denizen."

LOVE PHASES: A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

TARA.—THE EVE OF A BATTLE.

The KING.

OADHIM, his nephew.

MELCHA, his daughter.

THIERNA, a courtier.

The KING to OADHIM, entering.

King. Despairs are but the beacons of brave
hearts ;

She will not fail thee : 'tis her woman's way.
Raife thy heart's temp'rature to summer glow,
And her heart burns though it erst were snow.
Yet, surely, winter comes, and chilling frosts
Freeze up love's current : so the fervour cools !
Glory's the bride of Heros ! Woman is.....

Oadhim.

Man's element !

Without her he is nought—she is the frame
Wherein we set perfection.

King.

Thou art young !

Good pictures, Oadhim, suffer in their frames,

To hear the tinsel of mere setting praised !
 Bethink thee of thy country ! Up, and arm !
 While acts lead on to greatness, they that soar
 With love-light for a guidance blind themselves.
 Bring down thy heart, boy : do not fly so high ;
 Test, first, by deeds thy young ambition's wings—
 They may not serve to bear thee to the goal.
 Love comes to heal our failures—take thy shield ;
 And, as the sun sets on to-morrow's eve,
 Let glory shine upon thee—strive and win.
 Who gains experience, treads upon success.
 Thou art my nearest kinsman—I would see
 Thy life-blood ebbing on the battle field
 Rather than bind thee by love's fragile thread,
 And leave thee still unproven ! But enough !
 My words have wounded thee ; yet less in doubt,
 Than from a lack of more sufficient proof,
 Have I thus spoken of thy courage, boy !

[OADHIM *retires sorrowfully.*

King (solus). What pain this kingcraft is—now
 past relief !

I grow a-weary of the long unrest.
 How to be just we must be tyrants oft,
 When to be kind were worse than cruelty.
 We crown great ends by crushing lesser deeds,
 That in themselves are noble but not strong :
 True kings for aye will suffer while they rule.

[MELCHA *enters, and converses at back earnestly*
with OADHIM.

King (sadly). Melcha ! what the end *may* be of
 to-morrow's light,
 I know not save that we shall die or mourn !
 Art thou some prophet of the distant eld,
 Who bring'st an earnest to our royal house,
 Of that which I have prayed for ?

Melcha (embracing him). Father, no !
 Would I could read thee glad intelligence.
 To know thy old age happy were, to me,
 A joyfulness untold.

King. Yet thou canst smile !
 Thou'lt bound yon spark up in thy every thought—
 Mayhap to-morrow's sundown brings thee grief,
 The love thou nurturest for thy dalliance, gone—
 Thy young hopes withered in their blooming time !
 Lift to me, child ! thou'lt seen the am'rous sea
 Swelling her breast up with a heaving sigh
 That wakes the still shore, while, with luscious kifs,
 She trifles with the pebbles on the beach,
 Which for her beauty oft, and witching wiles,
 Have yielded up their quiet with a greed
 That drives them to undoing with all speed.
 Yet while these follow her alluring graces
 Adown the weedy slopes and sandy places,
 Behold ! she goes and leaves them on the strand !
 Life has a moral like it : look and learn ;
 Young hopes are stranded often.

[*Embraces her and is going.*
 Child, thou lov'st me not !

Melcha (clasping him). My years bear witness
how you wrong me now !

King. Why hast thou striven, by these girlish arts,
To blur the brightness of my cherished aims ?
Melcha, thou lov'st me not ! How may this Oad-
him prove

A fit successor to an arduous crown,
That soon will sink me with its duties down,
While thou tak'st vantage of his preference
To lure him from me and affairs of state ?
Love feels but once and singly. Mine's allegiance—
It will not show more though you hide it up,
In words of silver cadence. Rimy beards
And eyes that see not what soft actions mean
Are past the confines of the lover's world.
Oadhim shall die or conquer—thwart me not !

Melcha (entreatingly). Father, I love him, spare
him from the fight !

King (passionately). Am I so old then—grown so
feeble now—

That thou canst thus rebel against my will,
And set thy tear-moods up against the king,
To draw submission from me ?

Melcha (weeping). Thou dost heap
Too much of argument on thoughtless wrong !

King. 'Tis for the lack of thought I heap the
argument.

Melcha. The dawn shall find him on the field
to-morrow.

So thou wilt say I love thee.

King.

Wherefore so?

Fancy deserts us with our growing years,
 And leaves old age to sorrow and to thought.
 I do not blame thee that thou lovest me not,
 I cannot slumber in the dreams of youth,
 For I have passed the mellowness of love—
 The quiet gloaming of its still calm might,
 Decked with the starry thoughts of pure delight,
 That flood the heart up with a light so fair—
 And drown the earth-thoughts that might fettle
 there.

Thou canst not walk in yonder avenue
 With me in summer time as with another
 To find me weary in the first essay,
 Without recalling father. Do I add
 A sweeter perfume to the buds and flowers—
 A fuller interest to the flowing river—
 A softer cadence to the sound of harps?
 Love's sighs breathe soul-draughts to the thirsty
 heart,

And kisses mingle in the greedy air
 That listens to its vows. All things that else
 Were simply lovely, grow, beneath its sight,
 To more than majesty; while poorer forms
 Become such monsters of so fearful shape
 'Twere torture but to touch them: this is love,
 And I am only father, and the king.
 Love wells up with a heart-throb.....

Melcha.

Father, lift!

King (as if in soliloquy). Clasping one only, beautiful and bright—

We gaze into her eyes, until their light
Blurs o'er the surface of our dazed sight—

Melcha (entreatingly). Not one kind word, my father! Must I know

Nor friendship nor forgiveness?

King. Yes, kind words.

Thou canst not hope for friendship: 'tis between
Two spirits moving to most measured time—
Each one all yielding to the other's wants,
And both all striving for the other's weal.
Friendship o'ervaults all else in mere ambition,
Making itself a beggar.

Melcha. Adoration?

King (with anger). 'Tis not for men, but for thy
God in heaven!

Melcha. I would be all, yet am I worse than
beggar,

In that thou leav'st me nothing to bestow!

[*Exit.*

King (solus). My hopes are shredded into tangled
fears;

The woof of life is wearing since the day
When to meet danger was to win success,
Which, being won, did breed new dangers still,
To be again success! 'Tis past, and I am old!
Now am I forced to wait on circumstance.

Time draws off all allegiance from the limbs,
And makes them traitors to the fiery soul.

[Seats himself, and is lost in thought. A pause.]

Enter THIERNA.

King. Thierna, come hither. Lend me—thus—
thine arm.

I'll to my chamber. Gently, Thierna ; so.
Thou think'st me weak, and therefore pity me—
What sayst thou ?

Thierna. Since myself am so,
Who gathered years beside thee—fought and bled
Under thy guidance—saw thee meet the foe
With brow unclouded, and an eye undimmed.

King. Changes have followed in the wake of
years.

I tell thee, Thierna, carrion-seeking crows
Have sat full fated on the surging elms
That float o'er Tara ; while their growing young
Have aged to epicures on reeking air
That sent up earnest of the traitor's doom.
These men so fouled the entrance to my throne,
Ere yet I grasped the sceptre of this land,
That to be king was to suspect myself—
So great in baseness did I find my friends.

Thierna. My liege, I pray you think upon the
state,

The night is waning, and these ills of war
Demand your action early—

King.

Ay, 'tis well !

We'll to the inner chamber. I will there
 Give you such guidance as a poor conceit
 Would fancy most propitious. Bear with me—
 Meeting my humours with a ready smile. [*Rises.*
 Thierna, forget not that the boy be ready,
 For when the council mingles with the camp
 I'd see you lead him through the busy field,
 Acquaint him with the chieftains he will rule.
 I count no more upon extended sway ;
 My days are numbered by the coming fight ;
 And if I die or conquer—I'm at peace.
 Yet would I prove him ere I find surcease.

A PARTING.

AFTER THE MANNER OF CAREW.

Peradventure,
 Tongues would be busy if they only dare
 Not call thee fair ;
 But Calumny has fought too long,
 And fought in vain,
 To find a stain,
 Within a breast,
 So circled—so possessed
 By virtues each so exquisitely rare.
 Finding, among them, neither place nor part,
 She will not venture,
 For lack of that which is her passion-zest—
 A thought unhallowed, or a sigh unblest.
 So, for the rest,
 Thou'rt worthy higher tribute than my song ;
 And wider honour than a boy's belief.
 So much of goodness doth inform thy heart,
 And all thy acts illume,
 There is no room,

For friends to fail thee, nor for foes to censure.

Mere words, so weak and brief,

But faintly echo all thy merits claim.

I go into the strife—

To die or win it ;

Yet, with success in life,

Or fortune in it,

I cannot choose but yield me unto grief,

In that I miss thee while I seek a name.

Ah ! wilt thou think of me ?

Surely, I claim

A long remembrance of the hopes departing ;

And (if perchance, brief memories imparting)

I place the thought of thee

Above my fame.

We part !

May'st *thou* encounter grief,

Never till *my* belief,

In what thou art,

Fails to be strong as now—

Finds, in another vow,

Love like to this—

Seals, on a *purser* brow,

Hope with a kiss.

Thou would'st be rich indeed had I the giving—

Yet, how much richer I, from thee receiving.

Did but thy peace depend on my love living,

Thou would'st be free from sorrow and from
grieving ;

(89)

Or, might thy blifs,
Prove but fecure—
Ceafe not till I difcover
One to excel thee ;
Nor fade not, then, until I 'gin to love her,
Thy happinefs were fure
Whate'er befell me.

KEATS.

Thou deep-eyed, wondrous melancholy boy,
 Relater of bright truths that never cloy!
 Thou art not dead—not gone ! thy spirit plays
 Perennial melodies—thy glorious lays
 Are never-ending. All thy gathered bays
 Are blooming ever—yes, in spite of all,
 Thy “ thoughts of beauty move away the pall
 From our dark spirits.” No—thou art not dead !
 For he who once thy living page has read,
 Revives thee ever in his lonely walks—
 Revives thee 'neath the moonbeam ; with thee
 talks,
 The while thou pointest, with uplifted hand,
 From out this earth-life up to poet-land !

PASSED AWAY.

Oh ! the sunny days departed,
 With my beauty and my youth,
Leaving but a sad conviction,
 And a long uncertain ruth.
How the sorrow that is fiction
 Will assume the garb of truth—
How the wronged and broken-hearted
 Bear the slanders they refute !

While I watch the noontide glowing,
 Like my happiness of yore—
Watch the starry shimmer growing,
 Like my sorrow—more and more ;
While the moonbeam floods the ceiling
 Of my sombre silent room ;
While the shadows o'er me stealing,
 Seem the reflex of my doom—

I am conscious of a feeling
 More recurrent than the gloom ;

And of faithfulness concealing
 Where it ceases to illumine—
 By its inner light revealing
 Love retentive of its bloom.

What to me the bright achievements,
 Of the leader or the led—
 What to me the proudest story,
 Ever sung or ever said,
 Of the deeds that gave him glory—
 Of the field whereon he bled,
 While I mingle but bereavements,
 With the pæan for the dead ?

I recall the early greeting,
 And the love-light on his brow ;
 I recall the final meeting,
 With the certitude of *now* !
 While he wronged me in repeating,
 “ Thou art false to every vow !
 Be it so.” To my entreating—
 “ We are strangers, I and thou !”

Fullest recompense for sorrow
 Is the certainty of truth :
 I shall find it, on the morrow,
 Ere the wedding bells are mute !

Stately goes the rival beauty,
 Who enthralled him as he left—
 Lightly fits a sacred duty,
 On the heart so newly reft.

While the grave is scarcely broken,
 In a strange and distant land,
 See her smiling—take a token
 From the flighted suitor's hand !
 Hear the loving words re-spoken,
 By the lips that she foreswore !
 Pledge again, the promise—broken
 To the love that is no more.

By her falsehood is the measure
 Of my faithfulness confessed—
 By her vows unto the *living*,
 By the hand that *now* is pressed.
 Thus I claim and hold the treasure,
 Of the love that she *professed*—
 Claim the right to be forgiving,
 On behalf of him at rest.

Surely I am fully righted
 By the smiles that reassure ?
 And the love that sorrow blighted,
 Is the love that is secure !
 Let the suitor be requited,
 By the love that he has found—

(94)

I, the wronged one, and the slighted,
Am the regal and the crowned !

Scarce a moment since I hated—
Curfed the splendour of her face ;
Scarce a moment—I am fated
By the fulness of her grace !

Wander homeward, loved and lover !
May the future nought reveal—
May the true one not discover,
What the false one would conceal.

Though the moonlight sheds a lustre
On the pathway where you tread ;
Yet the shades behind thee hover,
And the clouds are overhead—
Go thy ways, accepted lover,
Of the faithless to the dead !

TO MANGERTON.

I am not old—why speak to me of years?
 'T was summer when we parted: I was free,
 New life before me, vague and undefined—
 Filled full of hoping and a boy's desire!
 I am not guilty of my own unrest—
 Why art thou then so eloquent of time
 So crowned with whiteness, like an aged head?
 I owe thee much of reverence and love,
 For I felt sympathy with sorrow first,
 From thy broad forehead gazing, in my youth
 On clouds that filled the valleys at thy base—
 Dipped from thy brows, and o'er thy heather
 breast,
 And filled old wrinkles on thy bearded front.
 From thee I gazed upon the peaceful lakes
 That lie, like nature's tear-drops at thy feet,
 And learned to love the beautiful and thee.

Thou art to me more potent than great books:
 They cannot wake a thought that never dies—

Revive it with old ardour, new surprise,
 When we have failed or suffered, and our eyes
 Look dimly backward, through a veil of tears,
 On weak achievements limned on faded years.

Yet am I debtor still—from thee I learned,
 How climbing mountains of thought-eminence
 Shows men on summits, pictures of wide seas,
 Which to the dwellers in life's humble vales
 Are hidden and unseen. From thee I learned
 How faith fills heaven with these quiet minds
 That rising never to doubt's altitude,
 Are filled with hope as with extended sight—
 Not yearning for large vision, or more height
 From which to gaze still farther than the land ;
 Judging God's distance by thought-absent friends,
 Who wander wearily and voyage far
 To unknown regions of eternal grief,
 Returning weary with *their own* belief.

CONTRASTS.

Guests, at a nobleman's board,
Drink to the bridal morrow ;
While, at the breast of the lord
Rankles a barb of forrow.

Hark to the pitiful wail !
" That woman, my lord, without ;
They are taking her off to the gaol."
" Merely a beggar, no doubt."

" What a singular fighting found !"
Says one of the great, at the table.
" John, have you looked to the hound ?
Make him a bed in the stable."

Over those steps, again,
Entered a bride in the morn,
Follow'd by powder'd men,
Stiff, and stately, and shorn.

H

Out of a prison den
 Issued a wretch that morn,
 Follow'd by brutal men,
 Eager to see and scorn.

“Quick ! or we'll miss the marriage,
 Yonder, in Hanover Square.
 They are off in a splendid carriage :
 Faith, they're a splendid pair !”

A birth in a chamber great ;
 A birth in a hospital ward :
 One in sorrow ; one in state ;
 Both the sons of a lord.

Doctors around her bed ;
 Nurses and friends beside.
 Lightly and softly tread—
This is a titled bride.

Cover *that* face in a shroud :
 Mention her name no more ;
 Though she was silent and proud,
 She was plebeian and poor.

The charity brat she bore,
 Yes ! let him grow up in the crowd,
 Cringe at the nobleman's door.
 Cover her face with the shroud :
 Mention her name no more !

(99)

Send the young heir to college,
To swim with the wealthy tide ;
Probing the depths of knowledge,
Skimming the shoals of pride.

It may be his natural brother
Will hold his horse for a crust ;
And neither can tell the other
Their kinship in common dust.

PROSPECTIVE.

Hither come, fair maiden—mine ;
Call me chosen—call me thine,
And with fairy fingers twine
A wreath of blooming eglantine—

A wreath for me !

Place it on my throbbing brow :
Kiss and crown me—poet now
I have seen boy Keats to-day—
Heard him sing a spirit lay—
Heard him sigh to think that he
Had loved and lost an essence fine,
As angel-like and full as thine,
Of purity.

But the meed that I have gained
Lacking thee, were unattained :
Thus I call thee my heart's queen—
Kneel to thee, for thou hast been
More to me than state and power,
More than crown—a spirit dower
Of poetry—

Whose absence thrilled remembrance into song—
Remembrance held unfulfilled for so long ;
Whose chieftest aim is but all good to know—
To whom my faults and failures lightly show :
 For, as of yore,
True love is passed all change to less or more.

CREEDS.

“ What is that which possesseth every sect, but that every sect should be uppermost.”—Oliver Cromwell.

When the war of creeds is ended,
And its jarring discords cease ;
When the sectaries are blended,
Into one religion—Peace ;

When no more we hold opinion
With a greedy self-esteem—
Naming that a damned dominion
Which our brothers holy deem ;

When we judge a worldly action,
With the charity we need ;
When we come from out a faction,
That would rule us by our creed ;

When no more we bandy phrases ;
Call a convert “ full of grace”—
(Reading others by *our* phases)—
Dub a pervert “ very base ;”

When we cease to struggle wildly,
For ascendancy and rule ;
When we greet another mildly,
And, regardless of his " school,"

Grasp him with a sturdy kindness,
Though our tenets tally never—
(We are mortals in our blindness,
And the blindness is for ever,

If we clothe it in the garments
Of a rancorous belief—
Make the chiefest of endearments
But the sources of our grief)

When our teachers leave debating,
Band together one and all ;
Cease to find a morbid fating,
In a rival teacher's fall ;

We shall need no more the sabre—
Have no further cause of strife ;
But shall gird us to our labour
With the zest of purer life ;

Hear the last of lamentations,
See the gory banners furled ;
Hold the " Parliament of Nations,"
" Federation of the World !"

FULON'S DEPARTURE.

A French minister who, when it was urged that some finance scheme of his would weigh heavily on the poor, made answer, "The poor may eat grass!" When the Revolution was at its height, he was seized in the street by the mob, and hung upon the nearest lamp-iron, with a bundle of hay tied to his back. He was afterwards decapitated, and his head borne in triumph through the city of Paris.—*Vide Carlyle's French Revolution.*

Shout ! we have taken him—
 Spread the news fast ;
 Fate has forsaken him—
 Left him aghast.
 Standing in front of us—
 Bearing the brunt of us,
 Looking as though he were martyred at last.
 Praying, difsembling,
 Gasping, and trembling,
 Hoary old wonder !
 Hell may awaken him—
 Send him to slumber !
 Since we have taken him
 Rend him asunder !

Quick with the fodder there—
Rip up the pillion :
He shall have Fulon-fare—
Food of the million.
He who discovered
Poor men to be asses,
Things to be ridden,
Brow-beaten, chidden,
And fed upon grasses,
Or begging for dole—
He shall have requiems
Sung for his soul !

What ! he refuses it—
Shuns the repast !
Well, if he chooses it,
Why, let him fast !
Here, with the halter, men,
Tie it behind to him,
Though his step falter when
Fortune is blind to him—
Though his creed alter, then,
Be not unkind to him !

Silence the throat of him—
Jabber and groans ;
Each have a blow at him,
Breaking no bones !

(106)

Fasten the knot for it—
Just a bit higher :
Here's a fair spot for it—
In with his head !
He'll never be nigher
To heaven. He's dead !

SONG OF THE NEREID.

Where the mufel and fcollop fhine,
Brighter than flowers ;
Where the feaweed and coral twine
Into fweet bowers—

Oh ! come with me, child of earth—
Come with me home—
To the place of our fpirit-birth
Under the foam.

Come to the pearly ftrand
'Neath the fea green—
Truft me fo fair a land
Ne'er haft thou feen !

Where life is a paffion
Too lovely to tell—
And the fea-nymphs fhall fashion
Around thee a fpell.

(108)

We follow the joyous beam
Gilding yon mountain ;
We glide o'er the glassy stream,
Roam by the fountain.

With the wild bee in summer,
We float o'er the wave ;
With the sea-bird in winter,
We fly to the cave.

Say, wilt thou be one of us,
Maiden, oh, say !
Ere the sea-king, advancing,
Shall lure us away ?

Oh ! come with us, child of earth,
Come to our home—
To the place of our spirit-birth
Under the foam.

Where the mussels and scollops shine,
Brighter than flowers ;
Where the seaweed and coral twine
Into sweet bowers.

IN A RUIN.

I am fitting quite alone—
On a column'd moulded stone
For a cold impromptu throne—
Ruling kingdom of my own,
In the air.

The ivy-leaves are glinted
With the moonbeam, by the breeze,
And the haggard walls are tinted
By the shadows of the trees,
Gaunt and bare :
While the wanton gems of light
Dance about in wild delight,
Setting partners to the zephyrs fresh and fair,
Here and there,
Playing soft Æolian ditties, tuned upon their
golden hair.

The dead are round me lying,
And the withered leaves a-dying ;
While the autumn wind is fighting
At the loneliness around ;

And I cannot cease from feeling
That a something is revealing
Dread similitudes profound :—
How the heart of many a poet,
Though they leave us nought to show it,
Knew Apollo, and was crown'd.

Surely this is more than seeming—
Sure I am not only dreaming,
Or surmising ?
For their skeletons, uprising,
Wake and sit upon the tombs !
And a lambent light is glowing,
Every look and action showing,
And the picture, in the moonbeam, most distinctly, lives and looms !

And I hear them all a-talking—
Faded manuscripts a-hawking
That were writ in early times,
As they jabber in the cold,
And a noisy conclave hold
Over their rejected rhymes.

While I watch them disagreeing,
Thinking no one near, or seeing,
Suddenly, athwart their faces
Each a bony finger places,

(111)

And they kneel and mingle curfes over Paternoster
Row—
Whilst the wildest of the spectres is the ghost of
Allan Poe.

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHT.

“ Husband, you are busy thinking,
Past and present ever linking ;
Take a penny for the thought :—
Strike a bargain. Is it bought ?
Let me know.”

“ ’Tis a fancy over-wrought !
Be it so.
I remember, long ago,
Cupid’s dart
Struck my heart ;
Cupid caught me unaware ;
On the landing of a stair,
Strung his bow.
And I’m still acutely feeling
(For the wound is never-healing)
All the smart
Of the blow.

“ And a maiden fresh and fair,
Sitting yonder in the chair,
Saw him do it :

(113)

Held me by her eyes and hair—
By the magic of her air—
 Held me there
While he drew it.
 Now you know,
Pay for hearing !—only this :
 But a penny !
Take it back, and give—a kiss,
 One of many.”

THE VOLUNTEERS.

Move together, noble soldiers, hand to hand,
Calm and steady,
Chosen band.

Giving proof that, by your presence,
There is fervour in the land.
Up ! and ready !

Champions of the good and true
One and all !
Rush to arms
At the call—

Keeping ever England's honour full in view.
War's alarms

Pass unheeded by a people proud of you !
Though the storm

Gather round us, yet the life-blood throbs anew—
Flowing warm ;

And we see the sun of freedom breaking through
While ye form !

TWO THOUGHTS.

I.

The worst is past !
From out the avenue of disappointed years
Hope comes at last.
She comes and gathers all the long arrears—
The withered fears
That on her path are cast ;
She comes and gleans them fast—
Calls them her own—
And, lo, they each revive !
Made by her touch alive,
Fresh and full blown !
Changed from wild roses, buttercups, blue bells,
To immortelles !
I know not why 'tis so,
But by her looks I know,
She comes to lead me out from shade and gloom—
From out my living tomb,
Somewhere to light !
To that sweet poet-land of pure delight
And happy lays ;

Where, from the crowd apart,
I may pour out my heart
In songs of praise !

II.

Ah, no !
I cannot go
With her to fairy land—the poet's sphere,
Where dreams are palpable, and visions clear :
I linger here !
Ah me, that it is so—
My heart is sad and low ;
Hope flits before me : I am left to gaze
Upon the gathered garlands and green bays
She weaves to bind a brow
More skilled in poesy and poet-ways
Than I am now.
Still can I praise and strive,
Still can I keep alive
All the bright longings that my heart has known ;
And all my fervour fate
About her court and state,
E'en though I rise not to the poet's throne.
If at her palace gate
I may but watch and wait,
Call her my queen ;
Then will my heart be blest—
And if I cannot rest,
Still I have seen !

A POOR MAN'S REMINISCENCE.

Light a pipe, and sit beside me,
You are welcome, neighbour Giles ;
Though I 'm low and silent lately,
We 'll be talking 'twixt the whiles.

Take a chair, and draw it nigh me—
Let the old one, yonder, bide !
'T is the seat she used to sit in,
That she sat in while she died.

And I 've not the heart to move it,
Nor to use it, nor to lend ;
For I 'd just as soon refuse it
To myself as to a friend.

'T is a twelvemonth since we parted,
And the gray is in my hair ;
Still I'm lone and broken-hearted,
Still I sit and think her there.

Don't I mind the time we mated,
With a prospect bright and fair ;
Don't I see her reinstated,
Sitting sometimes in the chair !

Though she's gone, my only darling,
Gone for ever—gone to sleep !
And I'm left alone in sorrow,
Paying double for my " keep."

Not that I be minding money,
Nor the saving up of store ;
But the grief is strong within me,
And I miss her more and more—

For I take my victuals lately
More for habit than for treat ;
And I care no more for living
Than I care for butcher's meat.

Ah ! I miss the Sunday walking,
And the sunshine of her sight,
And the cheery voice a-talking,
Of the troubles she made light.

Many things I think of doing
She'd have done if she was nigh ;
And I tell myself to do 'em,
But I goes and lays 'em by !

Let 'em be, I says, for, surely
There 's no fears but what they 'll keep ;
So the clock gives over ticking,
In the night, when I'm asleep.

And there 's many things neglected,
She 'd have looked to in her life ;
While I sit and look dejected,
Only thinking of my wife.

How I miss the quiet footsteps,
And the open sunny brow !
Then I never heard her moving,
But I feel the silence now !

Can you wonder that I 'm altered
In a twelvemonth, Farmer Giles ?
Fill the pipe and smoke a second ;
We 'll be talking 'twixt the whiles.

BRUNEL AND STEPHENSON.

Twin sons of thought, incomparable pair ;
Joint martyrs to achievements all their own ;
Great holocausts to glory ; each an heir
To bays in-woven—to a dual crown.

Both numbered, now, among the mighty dead—
Both gone to one account beyond the tomb ;
Yet shall not story's page be fully read,
Without recital of their deeds and doom !

They fought for England, and they left her crowned,
Withal the battle flew them ! They're endowed :
Their acts are writ on ages. They have found
Fame-niches high, above the titled proud.

God's patent made them lordly. They were kings
By triumphs that were bloodless ; and they fought
No gilded grandeur which escutcheon brings,
But that which is eternal, and of thought.

LIFE'S WORTH.

Life is surely worth the living,
When we live for love—
When our joys are giving
Earnest of a life above ;
While we are with actions blending
Thoughts of good intent,
In our watchfulness forefending
Those we may repent ;
When our hearts are too united
To be minding looks,
When we leave the studied attitude
To painters and to books.

Though the span of life is measured
Often by the coming hour,
Yet in moments God has treasured
Chances full of mighty power.
When in wisdom he essayeth
To revive a drooping flower,
He its killing thirst allayeth
By the welcome summer shower ;

And if love is fading ever,
Blinded by our passion-fears,
He will help the heart's endeavour,
And be healing it with tears.

The noon-day orb is hidden
Often by a thunder cloud,
And a darkness steals, unbidden,
O'er the evening like a shroud ;
Yet the sun is alway glowing,
Though perchance we see him not,
And the cheerful stars are showing
Ere his brightness is forgot :
Thus sweet hopes are ever dwelling
With the saddest of us all—
If we list, are ever telling
Tales of hope that cannot pall.

Life is full of peaceful pleasure—
Full of sunshine and of joy,
Far exceeding in their measure
Worldly thoughts that ever cloy,
So, if love is fading ever,
Blinded by our passion-fears,
Hope and help the heart's endeavour
To be healing it with tears :
Not with constant moody sadness,
Frighting laughter from the face ;

(123)

Not with cant, that seeks the badness
To be found in every place—
Dreary cant ! its fervour fating
On the downfall of the glad—
Dreary cant ! for ever waiting
To discover but the bad.

TO OLD FREEMASONRY.

Stoop from your blissful realms, old glorious men !
Whose shades still float among the column'd
aisles,
And wander, with our thoughts, in aged piles.
Can ye not open to our dazed ken
Gone forms of loveliness ? Behold ! again
Base foes have marshall'd, by their subtle wiles,
An Art-les's army : even now their files
Stand in your hallow'd foot-prints ! Then, oh ! then,
We call, in anguish, through the distant eld
(Who else, are nothing when we know you not),
Striving for ends that, long time since, were held
As passing lovely ! Must ye be forgot !
Shall borrow'd fameness conquer art at home
And England bow before imported Rome ?

Was it for this, great olden deeds were done ?
Was it for this, ye wander'd through the land,
Raising new beauties with unselfish hand ?
To be all else but worshipping ! Are there none

So blest but something steals athwart the sun,
 Which, unassisted, ripens to an end
 The boy-dreams of the heart that, growing, tend
 To emulate the past? Your race is run;
 And glories thicken in the wake of years,
 Making your unknown memories a light
 To cheer the gather'd darkness of our fears!
 Say, is there nothing now; no more delight?
 Never! oh! say not that to Pagan climes
 We yield the majesty of by-gone times!

Shall we not strive to keep your greatness green?
 Must the star wane—the reverential few
 Resign their glories to a fouler crew?
 Must we not be again what ye have been?
 Now false taste flourishes, and panders mean
 Do sell their names to fortune. Oh! renew
 The beautiful again. Mayhap, to you
 Boy-dreams are palpable; and you have seen
 The bright moon darken'd by a passing cloud,
 And felt the small stars pining for her light:
 Thus do we pine, the while abortions shroud
 Old God-like splendours in perpetual night,
 Can there be hope? Yes! truth must still survive:
 Ye mighty dead, I hear ye whisper, "Strive."

FAIRY TIMES.

By the silvery light
Of the jewelled night,
While the stars their watch are keeping ;
When the moon shines bright,
In the welkin height,
And the fons of men are sleeping ;
We dance and sing,
In a joyous ring—
Right merry and gay are we.
But we fade like a dream
With the morning's beam,
And homeward to rest we flee—
To hide in the shade
Of the woodland glade,
Ere dawn o'er the hills is peeping.

LINES IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

Fair one, I would fain obey you,
Take your wishes for commands ;
Only, for the future, pray you
Leave the task to abler hands.

Virgin page, so pure and white,
Emblem of thy owner's heart—
No ! her heart is nature-bright,
But thou art so by tricks of art.

Favoured—while in her possession !
Men there be who envy thee ;
Men, who, if they dared confession,
Thirst for looks but half as free.

Yet thou'rt cold—no smile returning
For those glances sweet and fair ;
Ah, what hearts are forely burning,
Doomed to lack, and to despair !

Though thou'rt dead to all sensation
Thou canst plead : for Cupid's sake,
Bid her leave, to thee, negation—
Bid *her* love and bid *him* wake.

[*After the lady had read the above.*]

Craven leaf that still retaineth
Frigid hues beneath her smile !
Though a blush thy neighbour staineth,
Thou'rt unchanged and cold the while !

By what magic, or what art,
Canst thou thus unmoved remain ;
Pale as though her eyes impart
No emotion—joy or pain ?

Didst thou suffer but a frown,
Or slightest sign of her displeasure,
Sure the shade of *whitey-brown*
Would haunt and tint thy lettered leisure !

THE TOOTHACHE.

His claim to manhood is confessed
Who bears reverses undepressed ;
But try him by the social test
Of toothache !

I own 'tis very weak to fret,
But though, *just now*, I'm happy, yet
Experience tells me I shall get
The toothache !

For all that virtue may demand—
For all that stoics may command,
No moral strength could e'er withstand
The toothache !

And I whose peace its coming mars,
And whose enjoyment it debars,
Can only live to curse my stars,
And toothache !

K

You place a palm on spotless vest,
And tell me life is but a jest ;
I answer, *you* are *not* oppressed
By toothache !

What boots it though I'm largely blessed
With all things else that give a zest
To single life, if I'm possessed
By toothache ?

Jones, perhaps, is calmly sleeping—
I, alas ! am vigil keeping,
And, with lotions, vainly sleeping
My toothache !

He, next morning, rises cheery ;
I, with bloodshot eyes and weary,
Wake with aspect sad and dreary,
And toothache !

He with bright eyes black and peery,
Nods and smiles, and calls me "beery,"
While, in fact, I'm mad and weary
Of toothache !

Yet he takes me for a sot,
And tells his wife that "Brown has got
The old complaint, and that is—not
The toothache !"

(131)

I hope to hear him yet, in tones
Of milder cadence mixed with groans
Exclaim (of course I envy Jones)
“ The toothache !”

SUGGESTED BY COWPER'S LINES TO
A LINNET STARVED BY NEGLECT.

Gone ministrant to pleasure—
Poor slave imprisoned once in gilded wires !
Is this weak tribute all thy fate inspires ?
How oft at leisure,
We hold a bright hope in our early age—
A bright hope like to thee—our heart the cage,
E'er long a new thought, like a bird more free
Allures us, and we follow full of glee.
So too when new thoughts—like free birds—
are fled,
We seek again the old one—find it dead.

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